

Design Aids

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Using undo, redo and history

It's easy to revert changes to a file when you've either made a mistake or if you simply don't like the result.

Any edits you make to your document are stored in the [History panel](#). You can then use this, or keyboard shortcuts, to undo an edit. You can also redo an edit which you have recently undone.

 A document's history can be saved along with the document, so earlier edits can be returned to even if the document is closed and reopened.

Using the panel, if you undo back to a step in history and you continue editing from that step you can reinstate your redo history that would otherwise be lost. This might be because you changed your mind or if you made an edit that accidentally removed your redo history. Two branches in the history are created:

- a visible new branch containing any new edits.
-  a hidden branch (viewable via a Cycle future icon) storing the redo history.

▼ To undo or redo a change:

Do one of the following:

- From the **Edit** menu, click **Undo** to go back one step, or **Redo** to redo the step previously undone.
- On the **History** panel, click one of the entries in the list to jump to that step.
- On the **History** panel, drag the slider left to undo a change, right to redo a change.

 Shortcuts:

- Undo: **Ctrl+Z**
- Redo: **Ctrl+Shift+Z**

▼ To return to root:

- On the **History** panel, drag the slider to the farthest position to the left.

▼ To save history with a document:

1. From the **File** menu, select **Save History with Document**.
2. In the **Saving With History** dialog, click **Yes** to accept the conditions discussed in the dialog.
3. [Save your document](#).

 Saving your document's history with your document may significantly increase the size of your project file.

 You can switch off the save history feature by repeating step 1 of the procedure above.

▼ **To reinstate your redo history:**

- Click **Cycle future** at the history step where you want to reinstate your original redo history. This history is hidden 'within' the icon, and will be reinstated on clicking.

▼ **To set the History panel preferences:**

1. In the **Edit** menu, click **Settings** (or **Preferences**).
2. Click **Performance**.
3. Drag the **Undo Limit** slider left to reduce the number of stored changes, right to increase the number of stored changes.
4. Click **Close**.

SEE ALSO:

[History panel](#)

[Save](#)

Clip to Canvas

Clip to Canvas restricts the document view, so you can only see objects which are placed on the page.



Before and after Clip to Canvas view mode applied.

 Clip to Canvas is switched on by default. This option is unavailable in documents containing [artboards](#).

When Clip to Canvas view mode is active:

- Objects on the page are visible.
- If objects extend beyond the page edge, only the parts of the object which are on the page are visible.
- Objects on the pasteboard are hidden.

When Clip to Canvas view mode is deactivated:

- The pasteboard becomes visible.
- All objects and layers are visible, regardless of the placement on page or pasteboard.

  If a particular layer or object has been hidden using the **Toggle Visibility** button in the [Layers panel](#), it will not be visible regardless of whether Clip to Canvas is active or not.

▼ To activate/deactivate Clip to Canvas:

- From the **View** menu, select **View Mode** and then select **Clip to Canvas**.

SEE ALSO:

[Viewing](#)

[Artboards](#)

[Arrange/Manage layers](#)

Clip to Canvas

Clip to Canvas restricts the document view, so you can only see objects which are placed on the page.



After (Click/Tap)

Before and after Clip to Canvas view mode applied.

Rotate document view

Rather than rotating the document permanently, you can rotate the document view instead. This allows you to view your document from a different angle without manipulating its layout.



About document view rotation

Being able to rotate the document view is beneficial for a number of applications:

- Brush and fine detail work
- Product design (e.g., product box/package layouts with content at 90/180 degree angles)
- Tablet-assisted design (drawing at angles)

▼ To rotate the document view:

- On the **View** menu, select **Rotate Left** or **Rotate Right**. The document view will be rotated in 15° increments.

▼ To reset the document view back to its original rotation:

Do one of the following:

- On the **View** menu, select **Reset Rotation**.
- Press **Ctrl+Alt+Shift+R**.

💡 For greater efficiency, assign your own custom keyboard shortcuts to rotating and resetting document view operations. See [Customizing keyboard shortcuts](#) for more information.

▼ To switch on document view rotation using a scroll wheel:

- From **Edit>Settings** (Tools option), check **Enable canvas rotation with Alt+scroll wheel**.



Modifier keys

With the above Preference set, the following modifier keys can be used to modify rotation behavior using a mouse scroll wheel:

- Hold down the **Alt** key while scrolling to rotate around the mouse cursor location.
- To rotate about the document view center, hold down the **Shift** key and the **Alt** key while scrolling.

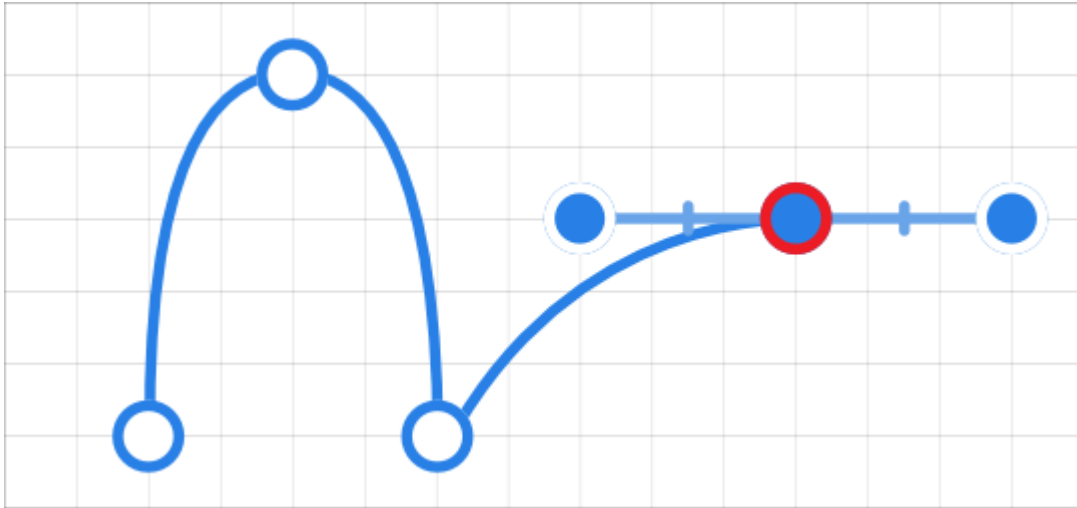
SEE ALSO:

[Settings \(or Preferences\)](#)

[Keyboard shortcuts for document view](#)

Grids

A non-printing, non-exporting grid can be displayed in order to help you to create interesting and well-constructed page layouts.



The grid is overlaid over your page to help you align objects. They are gray by default but can be any color you choose.

Grids can be **automatic** or **fixed**—the former (as default) changes the frequency of grid subdivisions as you zoom in/zoom out, the latter always keeps the grid frequency constant (irrespective of zoom level).

Grids work best when combined with snapping, in particular when the Snap to Grid option is enabled. They can be based on any document unit and will line up perfectly with [rulers](#) (when switched on).

▼ To show or hide the automatic grid:

- On the **View** menu, select **Show Grid**.

▼ To adjust automatic grid spacing:

With the **Zoom Tool** selected, do one of the following:

- Zoom in to see smaller grid divisions.
- Zoom out to see larger grid divisions.

At all zoom levels the grid shows as grid 'blocks' further split into grid subdivisions.

▼ To create a fixed square grid:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Select **Basic** mode.
3. Set the **Spacing** and **Divisions** values.
4. Click **Close**.

▼ To customize grid color:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Click the **Grid lines** or **Subdivision lines** swatch to display a pop-up panel to set the line color(s).
3. Drag the sliders to set the opacity of either, or both, line colors.
4. Click **Close**.

 For a different color or opacity for the subdivision lines compared to the main grid lines, click the **Link the grid colors** symbol next to the swatches.

▼ To create a rectangular grid:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Select **Advanced** and uncheck **Uniform**.
3. Do one of the following:
 - Set the **Spacing** and **Divisions** for the first and second axis.
 - Select **Fixed aspect ratio**, set the **Spacing** and **Divisions** for the first axis and then set the **Aspect ratio** and **Divisions** for the second axis.
4. Click **Close**.

▼ To create a fixed angular grid:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Select **Advanced**.
3. From the **Grid type** pop-up menu, select **Two axis custom**.
4. Set the **Angle** of either axis.
5. Click **Close**.

Presets

To make grid setup quick and easy, one of several grid presets can be chosen depending on how you plan to work (e.g., for UI design, image placement, etc.).

▼ To select a preset:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. From the **Preset** pop-up menu, select a preset.

 Available grid presets will vary depending on the type of document units used. To use different grid presets, you will have to change document units.

▼ To customize a preset:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Select a preset on which to base your new grid options.
3. Check individual options on/off to override the current preset's options.

The options will be in effect immediately.

▼ To save as a custom preset for future use:

1. Click the **Options** menu adjacent to the **Preset** pop-up menu.
2. Select **Create preset**.

The custom preset is in effect immediately.

▼ To manage grid presets:

1. On the **Grid and Axis** dialog, choose a preset or create your own.
2. Click **Panel Preferences**.
3. Select **Set as Default** or **Clear Default**, as required.

About pixel grid

When working with images at large magnification levels, zooming in an undetermined amount, a pixel grid serves as a handy visual aid. Pixel art and working with object detail are just a couple of examples of its use. A different grid color can also aid work where there is little color variance in the image.

   Enabling **Snap to grid** option will not initiate snapping to the pixel grid. However, you can snap to it by turning **Force Pixel Alignment** on and **Move by Whole**

Pixels off.

▼ To create a pixel grid:

1. From the **View** menu, do one of the following:
 - Select **Show Pixel Grid**.
 - Select **Grid and Axis**. In the dialog, check **Show pixel grid**.
2. Optionally, for the latter option, modify **Pixel grid lines** color for better grid visibility.

  Enable **Force Pixel Alignment** to ensure you are snapping to the pixel grid while working.

SEE ALSO:

[Snapping](#)

[Isometric and axonometric grids](#)

[Zooming](#)

[Zoom Tool](#)

[Pixel Tool](#)

[Document units](#)

Isometric and axonometric grids

Affinity Designer makes use of highly customizable isometric and other axonometric grids, perfect for UI/game design, digital design models, mock ups or designs which benefit from this style.



Isometric drawing.

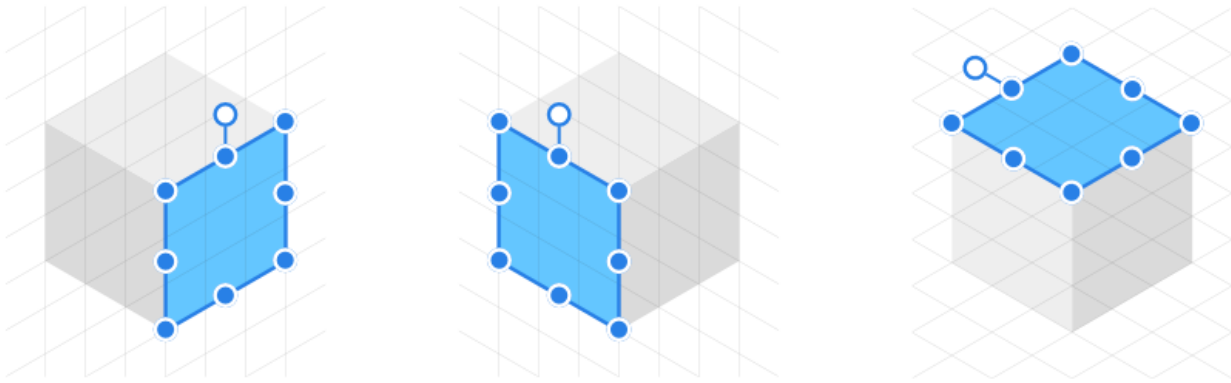
About isometric and axonometric grids

Isometric and other axonometric grids are, by nature, parallel projections. This means that grid lines never converge to a vanishing point as in perspective projections. Perspective projections are not supported in Affinity.

Affinity Designer lets you set up different types of grid in different ways:

- Isometric (with planes): Easy setup via the **Isometric** panel.
- Trimetric left and isometric (with planes): as presets from **View>Grid and Axis**.
- Dimetric, trimetric, oblique, triangular: from **View>Grid and Axis** (Advanced tab's **Grid type** option).

For any axonometric grids, planes can be switched between, using the apostrophe key ('), so you can apply in-plane transforms on front, side and top planes in turn.



Front, Side and Top planes of isometric grid showing selected object transformed to fit in-plane.

Once a grid is set up, you can draw geometric shapes, art text and gradients directly on the active plane and selectively transform curves, closed shapes and placed images to the plane of your choice using the Move Tool.

About snapping controls

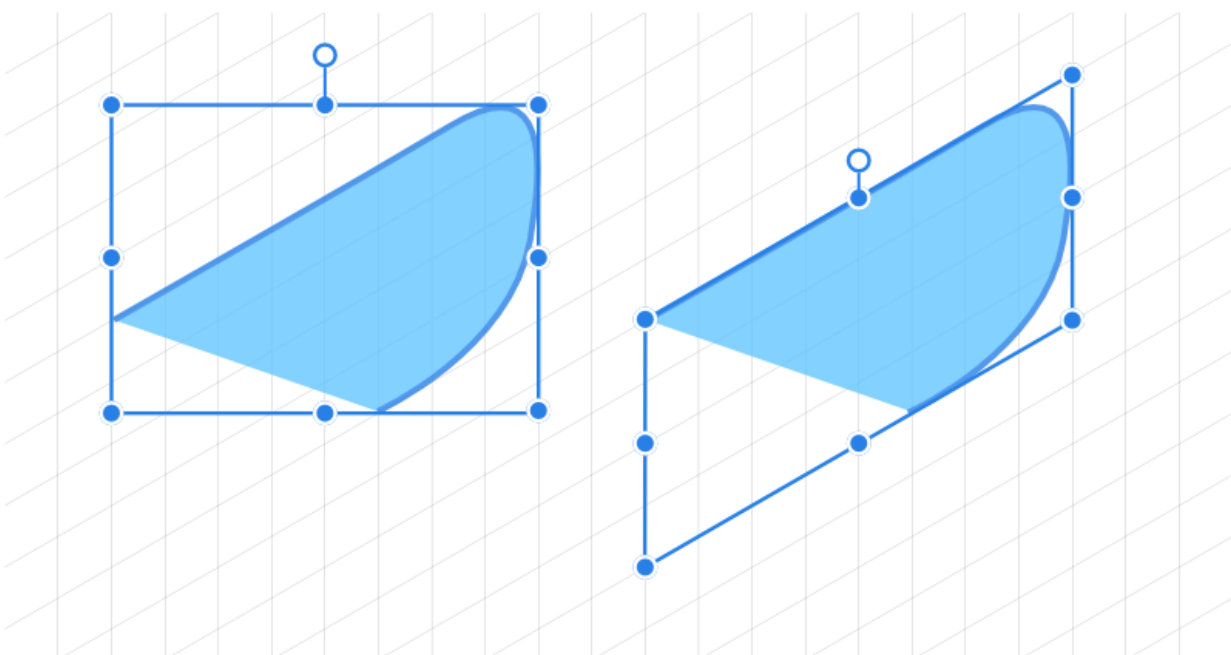
Grids work best when combined with snapping. Object handles and curve nodes snap precisely to any grid line and line intersections.

Grids can be based on any document unit, shown when switching on the rulers.

Using Cycle Selection boxes

When drawing curves on plane, take advantage of the **Cycle Selection Box** setting on the **Select** Menu. Its 'Planar bounds' option transforms the curve's selection box (not the object) to that of the current plane, allowing easier positioning/snapping of curves to the grid. Once Planar bounds is set, fitting the curve to a different plane subsequently will change the planar box too.

It's possible to permanently set the object's selection box to orient to the current plane. The object is unaffected. When reselecting the object again, the selection box will remain 'in plane'.



Selection box (not object) changed to 'Planar bounds'.

For out-of-plane editing, choose a **Cycle Selection Box** setting of 'Base Box' or 'Regular Bounds'.

▼ To create an isometric grid:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Isometric** from the **Studio** options to display the **Isometric** panel.
2. Click **Modify Grid**.
3. On the now displayed **Grid and Snapping Axis** dialog, check **Show Grid**.

💡 If you haven't set up a grid previously, you'll be prompted to initially modify the settings (e.g., grid Spacing) for your new isometric grid; you can then make the grid visible.
If an isometric or other type of axonometric grid was already set up, the you won't be prompted for settings.

▼ To jump between grid planes:

Do one of the following:

- From the **Isometric** panel, click **Front**, **Side** or **Top**.
- Press the apostrophe (') key to cycle between planes.

✎ This plane-swapping behavior is a fundamental principle in drawing the 'faces' of an object (Front, Side and then Top plane).

▼ To set the grid spacing:

- On the **Grid and Snapping Axis** dialog, set the **Spacing** and **Divisions** values.

▼ To set grid snapping:

1. On the Toolbar, select **Snapping**.
2. Select a **Preset**, e.g. Curve drawing, ensuring that **Snap to grid** is also checked.

This ensures that objects will fit accurately to grid lines.

▼ To draw geometric shapes directly on the grid:

1. From the **Isometric** panel, enable **Edit in plane**.
2. With a shape tool selected, drag out a chosen shape. You can snap your shape to the grid on creation when dragging initially from any grid intersection or when repositioning and/or scaling the shape.

▼ To fit two-dimensional objects to plane:

1. Select a curve, closed shape, artistic text or image.
2. On the **Isometric** panel, choose a plane (Front, Side, Top) to send the object to.
3. On the same panel, select **Fit to plane**.

💡 If you **clip** objects to parent objects before fitting them to the plane of your choice, these child objects will automatically follow the parent object's transformation on plane.

💡 If including text on any plane, ensure artistic text is used rather than frame text. The frame properties of frame text means that transformation on plane is not exact.

▼ To transform any object on the grid:

- Select the object in the plane, then do one of the following:
 - On the **Isometric** panel, ensure the correct Current plane is set (must be the same plane as that which the object was originally drawn on), then use the panel's 180° flip and 90° rotate options.
 - To rotate the object on the page, drag its Rotation Handle clockwise or anti-clockwise. Press the **Shift** key to rotate in 15° increments.

 If you wish to rotate objects using Rotation Handles, ensure **Edit in plane** is enabled.

▼ To change other isometric grid settings:

- On the **Isometric** panel, select **Grid Settings**. From here, you can:
 - Switch on the grid origin (axis editing handles)
 - Add intermediate grid angles for snapping or constraining to.
 - Add an axis perpendicular to the current plane for snapping or constraining to.
 - Set the grid color and transparency

▼ To cycle between selection box types:

- On the **Select** Menu, choose **Cycle Selection Box**.

▼ To set the selection box to Planar bounds permanently:

1. Cycle to the selection box option called *Planar bounds* using **Cycle Selection Box** on the **Select** Menu.
2. On the same menu, choose **Set Selection Box**.

Advanced grids

The **Grid and Snapping Axis** dialog's Advanced tab is ideal for laying out advanced axonometric grids as well as two-dimensional fixed grids and isometric grids.

Instead of the commonly used isometric grid set up via the **Isometric** panel, a choice of other project grid presets can also be selected (e.g., dimetric, triangular); you can even create custom axonometric grids with options for enabling plane sets, grid sizing, custom aspect ratios and angles for more advanced use.

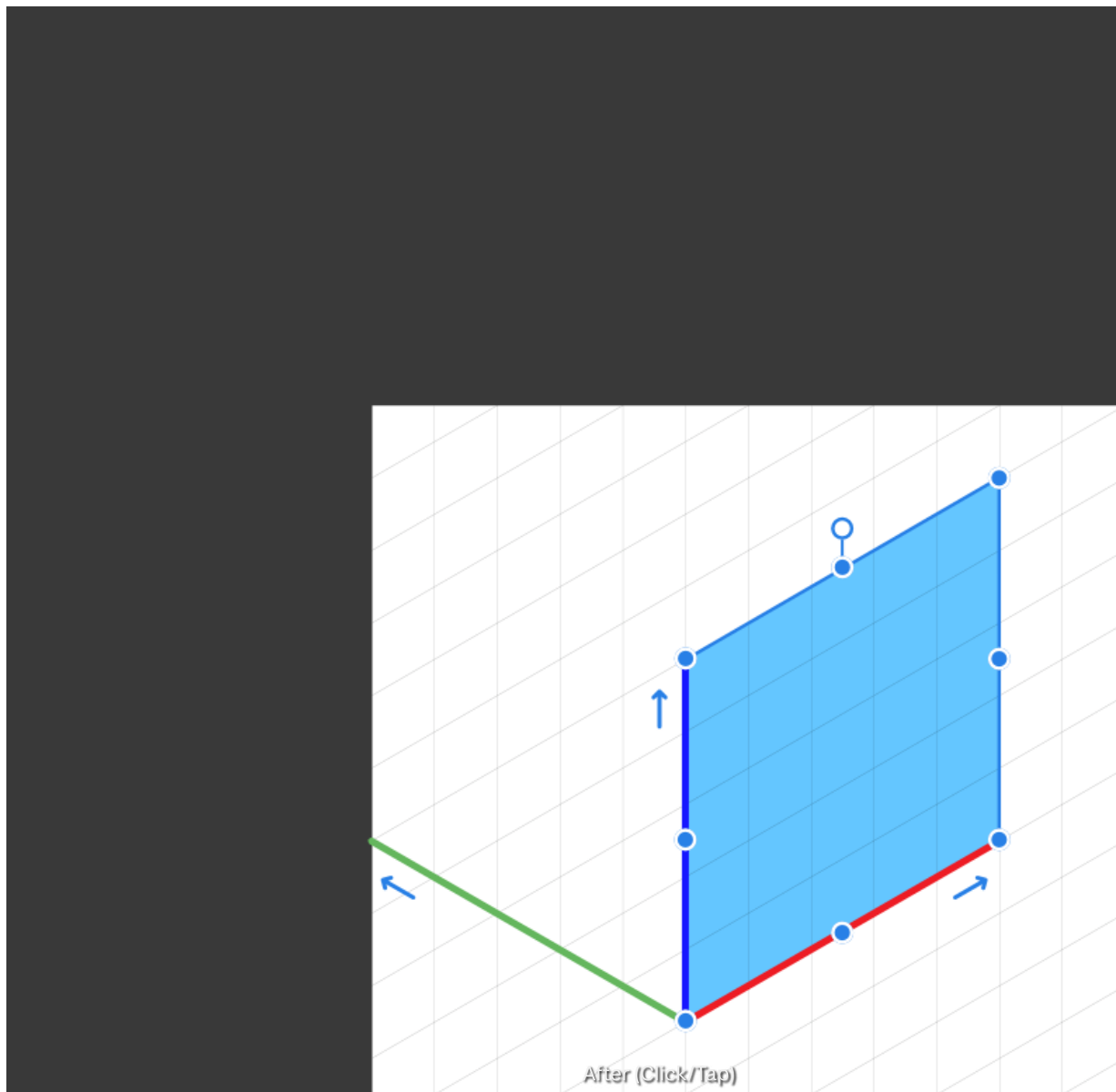
If you're looking beyond the presets such as isometric you can customize the grid to your liking.

Grid origin

The grid origin is a point at which axes meet and is the corner of the logical plane. The origin is shown as a set of axis handles (in red, green and blue) which can be extended or repositioned on the page.

For most axonometric grids, the axis handles remain locked in relation to each other but can all be lengthened by the same amount simultaneously to set grid spacing.

The origin is set by dragging the grid origin (top left corner of page) by its intersection point and positioning it on the page. As you change between planes, the handles on the active plane will be shown thicker.



You can snap the grid origin to an object on any plane and equally snap an object to a fixed grid origin.

Setting up additional axis

You can introduce additional angles and an extra axis to your grid that gives you extra options for snapping and constraining object edges, corners and curve nodes to.

- **Intermediate angles**—adds additional angles between axes that can be snapped or constrained to.
- **Intermediate divisions**—Divides the angle between axes by a set number (set to 4 for 22.5° divisions for origami).
- **Plane perpendicular axis**—creates another axis perpendicular to any active plane on axonometric grids. **Create plane set** must be enabled.
- **Horizontal axis**—adds an additional horizontal axis for constraining or snapping.
- **Vertical axis**—adds an additional vertical axis for constraining or snapping.

Understanding axis and snapping colors

You may see the following colors which indicate different axes while snapping or constraining:

- Red line: First axis (X axis on basic square grid)
- Green line: Second axis (Y axis on basic square grid)

- Blue line: Third axis (Z axis; axonometric grids)
- Yellow node: Intersection point
- Purple node: construction snap
- Orange node: intermediate angles

▼ To set your advanced grid:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Do one of the following:
 - Select a Parallel perspective preset from the **Presets** pop-up menu.
 - Click **Advanced**, then from the **Grid type** pop-up menu, select a grid, then edit its settings in the dialog.

▼ To manage grid presets:

1. On the **Grid and Axis** dialog, choose a preset or create your own.
2. Click **Panel Preferences**.
3. Select **Set as Default** or **Clear Default**, as required.

▼ To view and position the grid origin:

1. From the **Grid and Snapping Axis** dialog, check **Show axis editing handles**. By default, the grid origin will show at the top-left corner of your page.
2. Drag the grid origin intersection to a point on your page, e.g. a corner of a geometric shape.

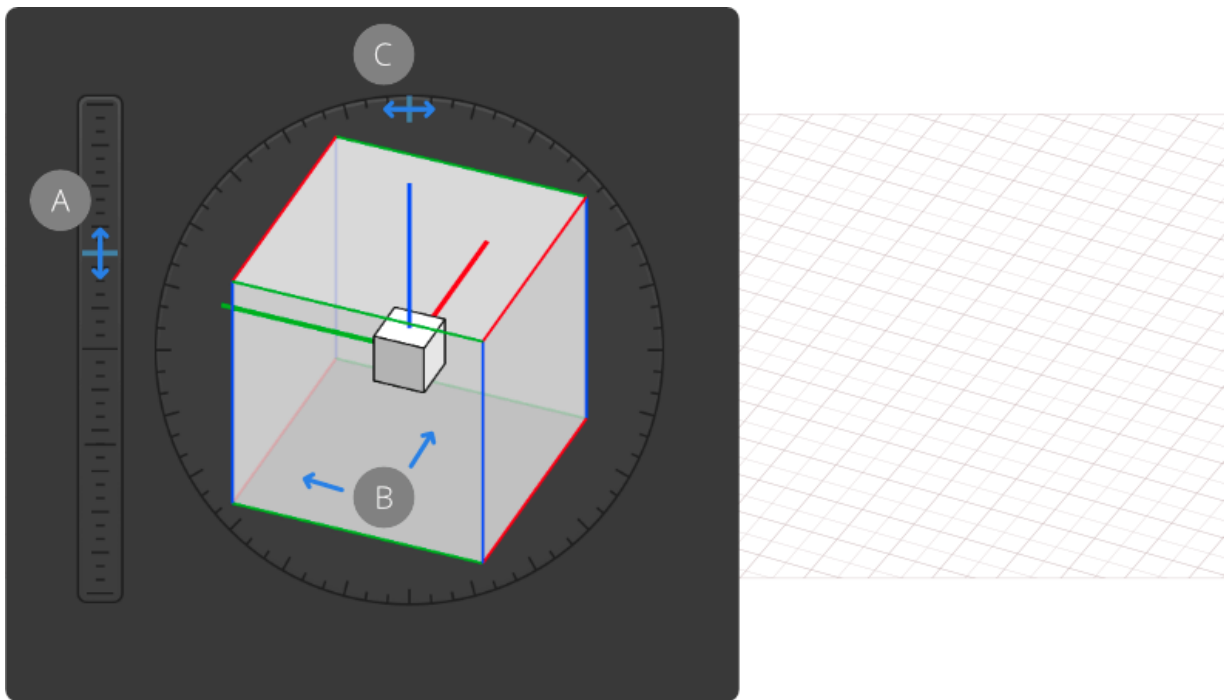
 Reset the origin by double-clicking the intersection.

▼ To set the grid spacing:

- On the page, drag the end of one of the red, green or blue axis-editing handles outwards or inwards to size the grid. If snapped to an object you can size the grid to the object.

Custom grids using Cube mode

Cube mode offers a natural approach to setting up an axonometric grid. You can alter the elevation, orientation and roll of the cube, which automatically repositions your grid on the page.



Changing the Elevation (A), Orientation (B) and Roll (C) when using the grid Cube mode.

Grid cube advantages

- Visually preview and configure the grid using a controllable cube.
- Keeps the logical scale to be the same as 2D objects where axes are foreshortened rather than relying on mathematical values to define axis length.

▼ To set up an axonometric grid using Cube mode:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Grid and Axis**.
2. Set the **Mode** to be 'Cube'.
3. Set the **Cube Scale** which is the edge size of the cube and any **Divisions** value for all axes.
4. Change the Elevation (**E**) by dragging the blue marker on the vertical slider next to the cube (or input a specific E value), using available snapping points if needed.
5. On the cube, adjust the cube Orientation (**O**) by dragging left or right (or enter an O value). The angle and the lengths of the grid axes are derived from the cube orientation.
6. On the outer ring gage around the cube, drag the blue marker to adjust the Roll (**R**) setting.

 For a true isometric grid, a snapping point at 35.3° OR -35.3° can be combined with an O (Orientation) angle of 45°.

Modifier keys

The following modifier keys can be used:

- The **Alt** key temporarily overrides snapping.
- The **Shift** key adjusts Orientation and Roll in 5° increments.

Custom grids

For custom grids, any grid origin's axis editing handle's length and direction can be changed in relation to and independently of other handles.

▼ To create a custom grid:

1. From the **Grid and Snapping Axis** dialog, select either **Two axis custom** or **Triangular custom**.
2. Enable **Uniform** to keep grid spacing the same across axes.
3. Enable **Create plane set** to activate and configure the **Up** axis.
4. Enable **Fixed aspect ratio** to configure the aspect ratio between axes. Disable to keep the same aspect ratios for Second and Up axes.
5. Do one of the following:
 - Configure **Spacing**, **Division** and **Angle** setting for First, Second and Up axes.
 - With the **Move Tool** enabled, drag an axis editing handle on the grid origin inwards or outwards, changing its angle.
6. Click **Close**.

▼ To rotate a custom grid:

- With a hardware connected mouse, press both the left and right buttons together and drag any axis handle.



Modifier keys

As you adjust the handles, the following modifier keys can be used:

- Dragging with the left and **RightMouse** button pressed together allows you to rotate a custom grid.
- Left and right mouse button with the **Shift** key pressed constrains grid rotation to 15 degrees increments.
- The **Shift** key locks axis angles so length (i.e. grid spacing) is changed and not angles.
- With **Snapping** enabled, the **Alt** key temporarily ignores it while adjusting a custom grid.
- **Double-click** matches the second axis length (if resized).

SEE ALSO:

[Draw curves and shapes](#)

[Draw and edit shapes](#)

[Grids](#)

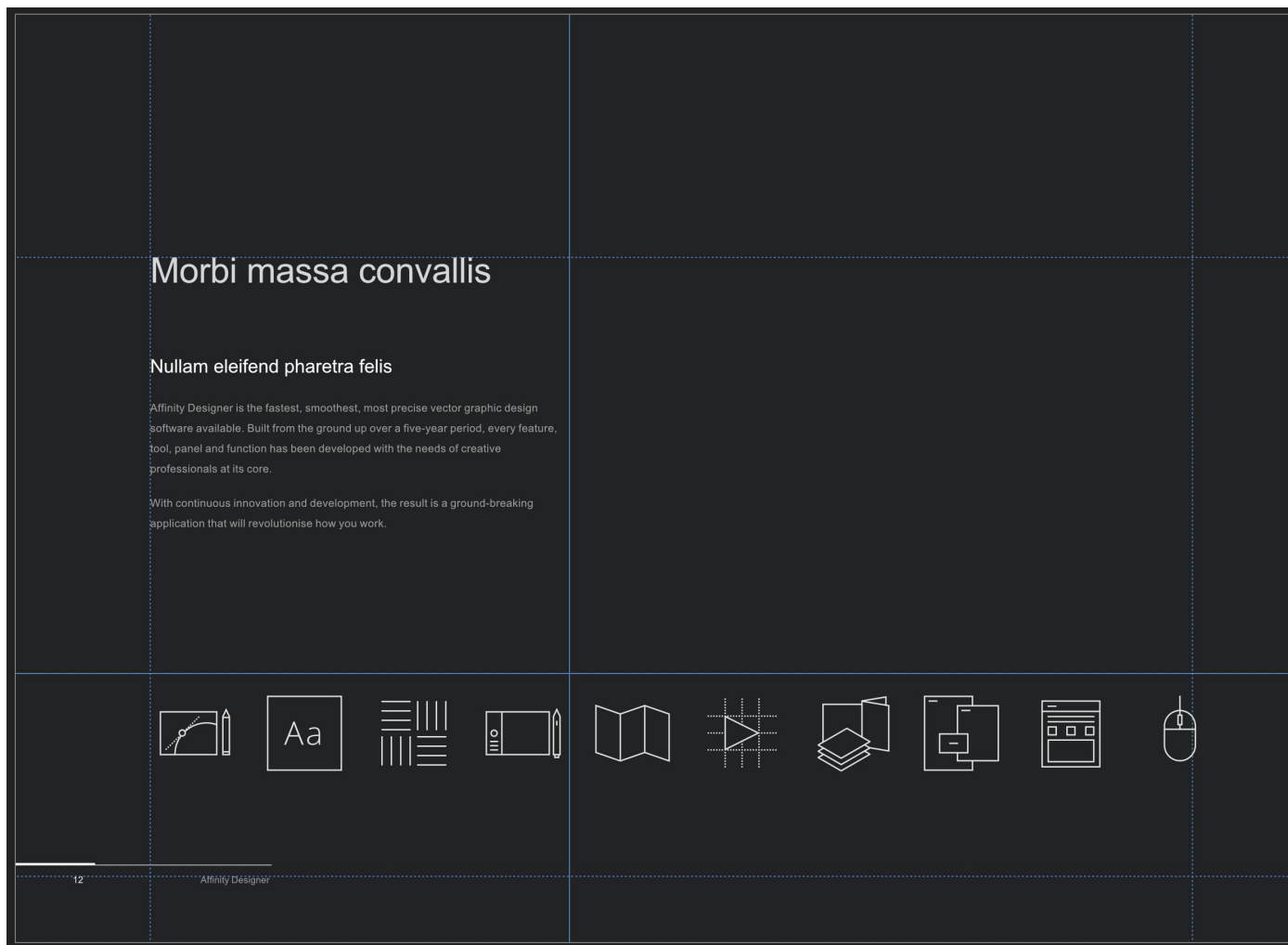
[Snapping](#)

[Rulers](#)

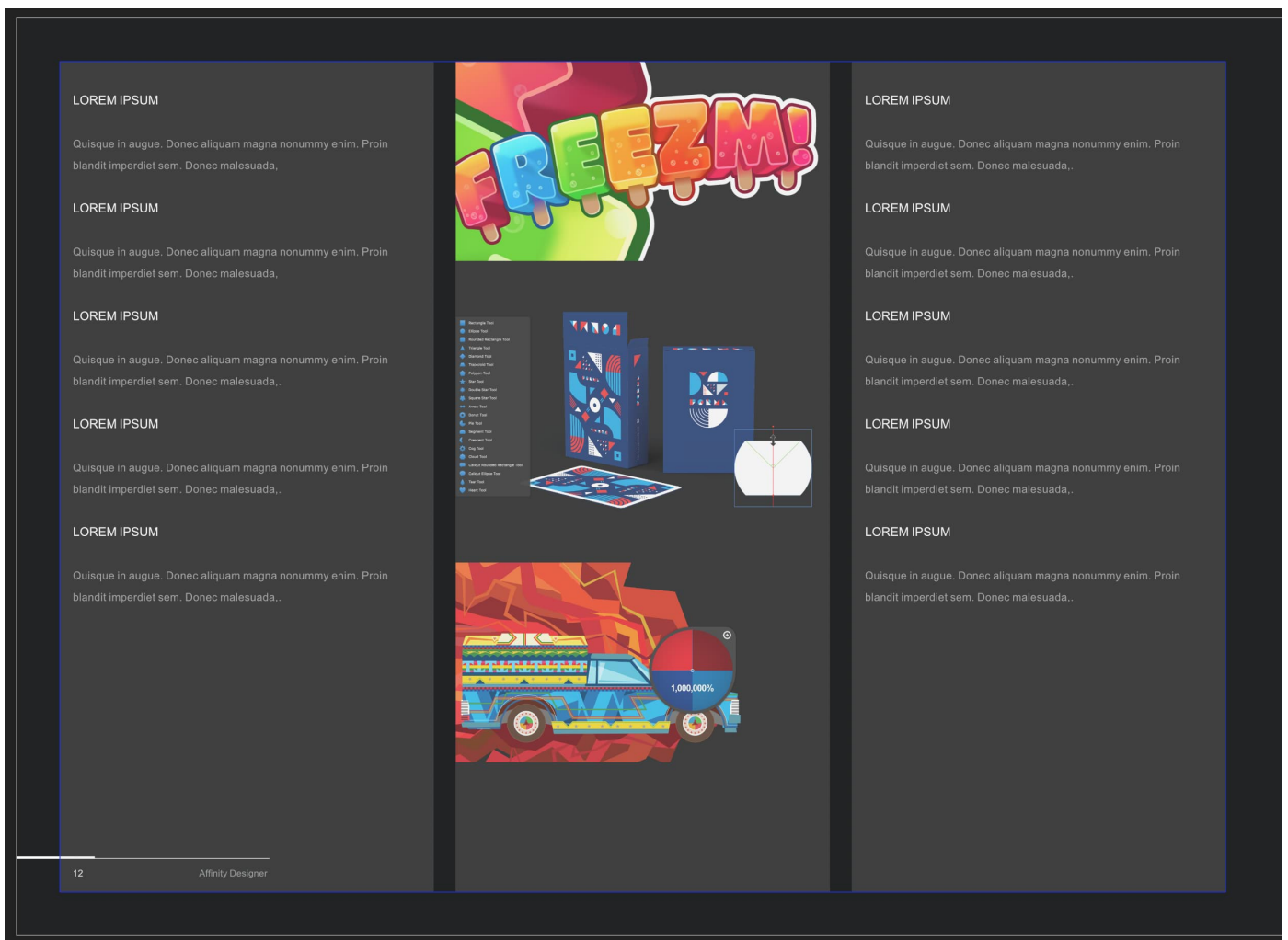
[Layer clipping](#)

Ruler and column guides

Guides are non-printing, non-exporting lines that float over page objects and assist with their positioning. There are two types of guides to aid a variety of designs—ruler and column. They can be created and positioned by dragging from a ruler (for 'by eye' placement) or via **View>Guides** (for precision using the document's units or a percentage).



Text frame, footer text, and icons aligned to ruler guides.



Text frames and graphics aligned to three-column guide.

Ruler guides

Ruler guides can be set in accordance with the horizontal or vertical ruler, but can be freely moved and positioned on your page.

▼ To open Guides settings:

Do one of the following:

- On the **View** menu, select **Guides**.
-  With the **Move Tool** selected, double-click an existing ruler guide in the document view. The guide will become selected.

▼ To add a ruler guide:

Do one of the following:

- With the **Move Tool** active, for 'by eye' placement, drag from either the horizontal or vertical **ruler** which can be switched on via the **View** menu.
-  On **Guides** settings, click the **Add new guide** icon for either horizontal or vertical ruler guides.

 Use the up/down arrow keys or the mouse wheel (if available) to nudge guide values.

▼ To clone a ruler guide:

- With the **Move Tool** active, drag a guide with the **Ctrl** key pressed.

▼ To move a placed ruler guide:

Do one of the following:

- Drag the guide with the **Move Tool** when you see the cursor change.
- With any tool, ensure that **Show Rulers** is switched on (via the **View** menu) and drag the guide marker directly from the horizontal or vertical ruler to reposition the guide.
- From the **View** menu, select **Guides**. Double-click on the value for the guide you want to edit and type a new position into the value field, use your keyboard's up/down keys or mouse scroll wheel.

 For both cloning and moving guides, a readout reports the distance from the spread origin (X or Y) and original guide position (Δ delta).

With **Snapping** enabled on the Toolbar, you can snap back to the cloned or 'moving' guide's original position. This is useful for rechecking the drag distance (delta) before cloning/repositioning the guide.

 Guide positions will automatically update relative to a repositioned [spread origin](#).

▼ To position ruler guides by percentage:

1. From the **View** menu, select **Guides**.
2. Select the **Percent** option.

Percentages are calculated from the top-left of the document page.

▼ To reposition the spread origin:

- Do one of the following:
 - Drag the spread origin from the ruler intersection to position it on the page. If snapping has been activated, the spread origin will be able to snap to objects on the page.
 - From the **View** menu, access **Guides**. Enter **X** and **Y** values into the **Spread Origin** section.

▼ To show or hide ruler guides:

- From the **View** menu, select **Show Guides**. A check mark is displayed next to the menu item when the guides are visible.

 If guides are hidden, they will automatically become viewable again if a new guide is added by dragging from a ruler.

▼ To remove ruler guides:

Do one of the following:

- With the **Move Tool** selected, drag the guide off the page.
- With the **Alt** key pressed, click on a guide.
-  From the **View** menu, select **Guides**. Click to select the value for the guide you want to delete and then click the **Remove guide** icon.

 When creating or moving objects, you can snap to guides.

▼ To lock all guides:

- From the **View** menu, select **Lock Guides**.

Column guides

Column guides allow you to specify a number of evenly spaced columns and rows and are perfect for designing layouts such as web mockups.

▼ To add a column guide:

- From the **View** menu, switch on **Show Column Guides** then select **Guides**. The **Column Guides** section allows you to manage the following:
 - **Columns**—defines the number of vertical guides that will appear.
 - **Rows**—defines the number of horizontal guides that will appear.
 - **Gutter**—defines the size of the gutter.
 - **Style**—select from **Filled** or **Outline**.

▼ To change ruler or column guide color:

1. From the top menu, select **View>Guides**.
2. On the pop-up dialog, click **Set the column guide color** and set the new color.

▼ To show or hide column guides:

- From the **View** menu, select **Show Column Guides**. A check mark is displayed next to the menu item when the guides are visible.

▼ To remove column guides:

- From the **View** menu, select **Guides**. Reduce the number of **Columns** and **Rows** in the **Column Guides** section to 1.



Modifier keys

The following modifier keys can be used:

- The **Ctrl** key clones a dragged ruler guide.
- The **Alt** key deletes a clicked ruler guide.
- The **Shift** key snaps a 'moving' guide to ruler units based on the spread origin.
- The **Shift** and **Alt** keys snap a 'moving' guide to the drag distance (delta) based on ruler units.

SEE ALSO:

[Snapping](#)

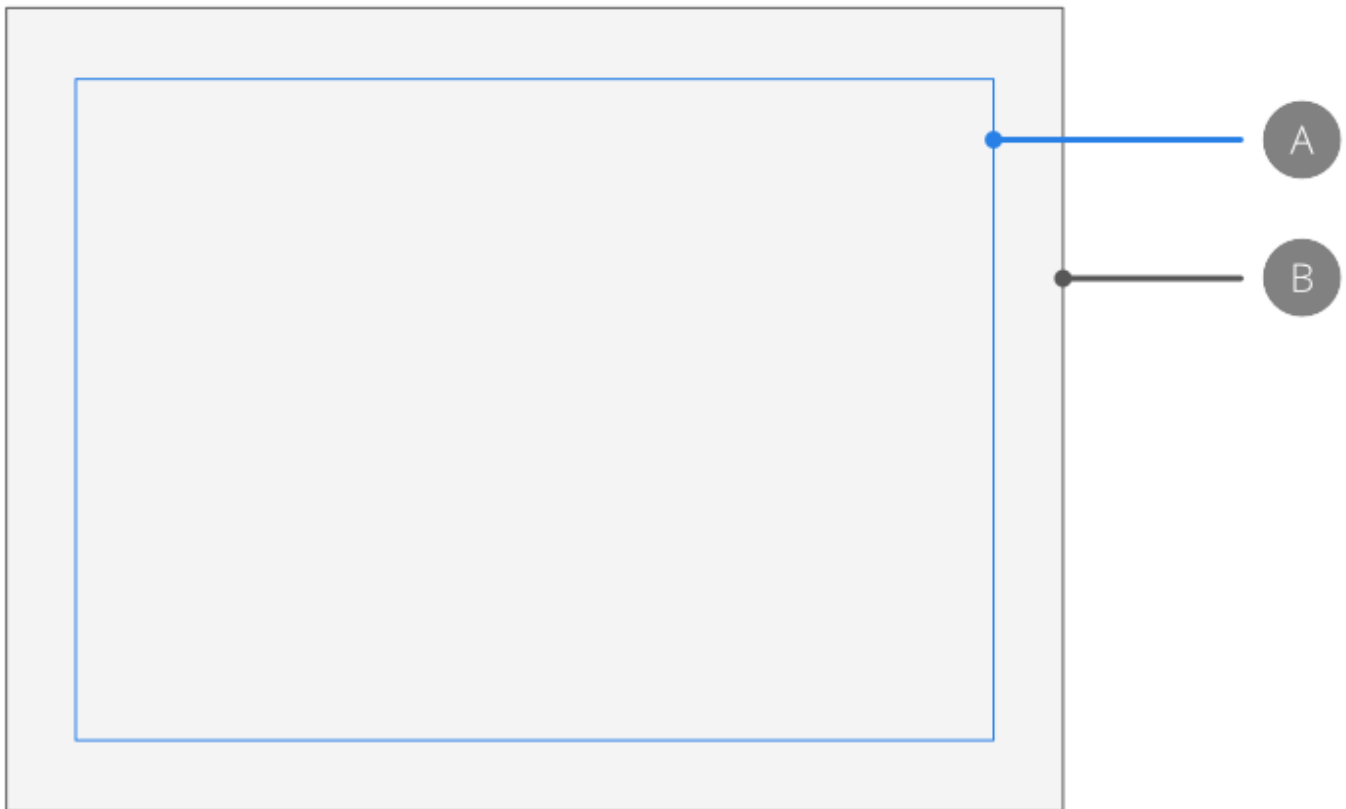
[Dynamic guides](#)

[Rulers](#)

[Margins](#)

Margins

The margin is the area between the main content of the page and the page edges (or spread and spread edges). Margins (hidden by default) are indicated by a blue solid line, but this color can be changed.



Default margin (A) in relation to page edge (B).

Page margins give an indication of the extent of the page that will be printed when using a desktop printer. Design elements positioned outside the margins may not be printed.

Margin positions can be customized manually or using the settings of an installed printer. They are non-printing and non-exporting.

 Margins can also be used for snapping to when creating or moving objects.

 If you intend on exporting your design, rather than printing it directly, you can design with complete freedom from margins. If this is the case, you may wish to switch off the margins.

▼ To change page margins:

1. From the default context toolbar, or **File** menu, select **Document Setup**.
2. In the pop-up dialog, select the **Margins** tab.
3. Select the **Include margins** option.
4. Do one of the following:
 - Set the **Left Margin**, **Right Margin**, **Top Margin**, and **Bottom Margin**.
 - Click the color swatch to display a pop-up panel to update the margin color.

▼ To hide/show margins:

- From the **View** menu, deselect/select **Show Margins**. A check mark is displayed next to the menu item when the margins are visible.

▼ To change the color of margins:

- From the **File** menu, select **Document Setup**.
- From the **Margins** tab, click the color swatch to display a pop-up panel to update the margin color.

SEE ALSO:

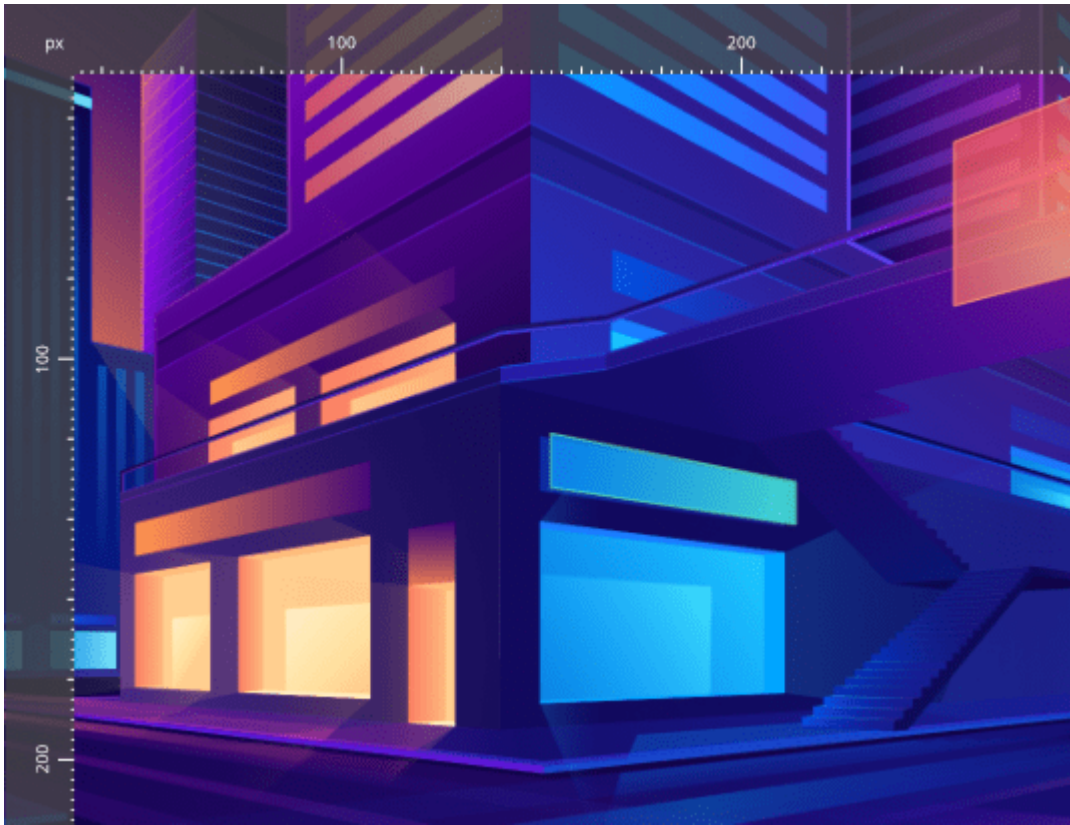
[New Document](#)

[Snapping](#)

[Guides](#)

Rulers

Rulers are useful when you need to accurately place objects or guides in the document view.



 The intersection point where both vertical and horizontal rulers have a value of 0 is called the spread origin, also known as the ruler origin.

▼ To show or hide rulers:

- From the **View** menu, select **Show Rulers**. A check mark is displayed next to the menu item when the rulers are visible.

▼ To reposition the spread origin:

- Do one of the following:
 - Drag from the default horizontal/vertical ruler intersection at the top left of your document view to position the spread origin on the page. If snapping has been activated, the spread origin will be able to snap to objects on the page.
 - From the **View** menu, access **Guides**. Enter **X** and **Y** values into the **Spread Origin** section.

 If you have placed ruler guides, their positional values will be recalculated based on the repositioned spread origin.

 Changing the units, via **Right**-click of the ruler intersection, will automatically change the units on displayed rulers.

SEE ALSO:

[Guides](#)

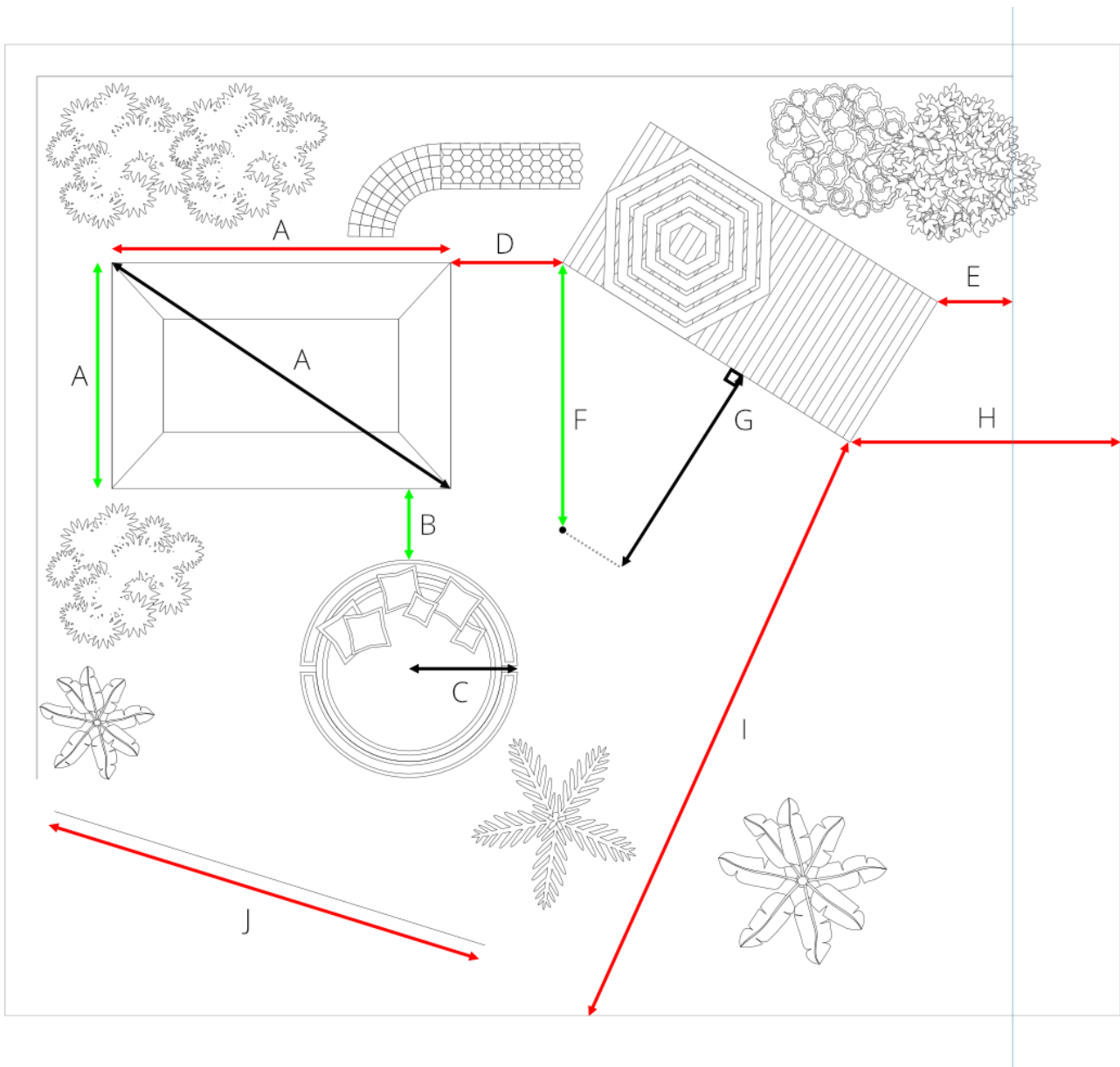
[Document units](#)

Measuring

Measuring lets you display the distance between points, objects and page elements on the page—using either a dedicated Measure Tool or a hover over feature. An Area Tool additionally measures the area of one or more objects, plus the perimeter of a shape and open curve lengths.

Measuring with the Measure Tool

The Measure Tool lets you accurately measure the distance between a fixed point and an object's edge, corner, center or at the intersection of two objects vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Curves and page elements such as page center, edge and edges (corners) can also be measured to. The reverse is also true—you can measure from any page element to any point or an object's edge, corner or at object intersection. You can even measure between placed guides.

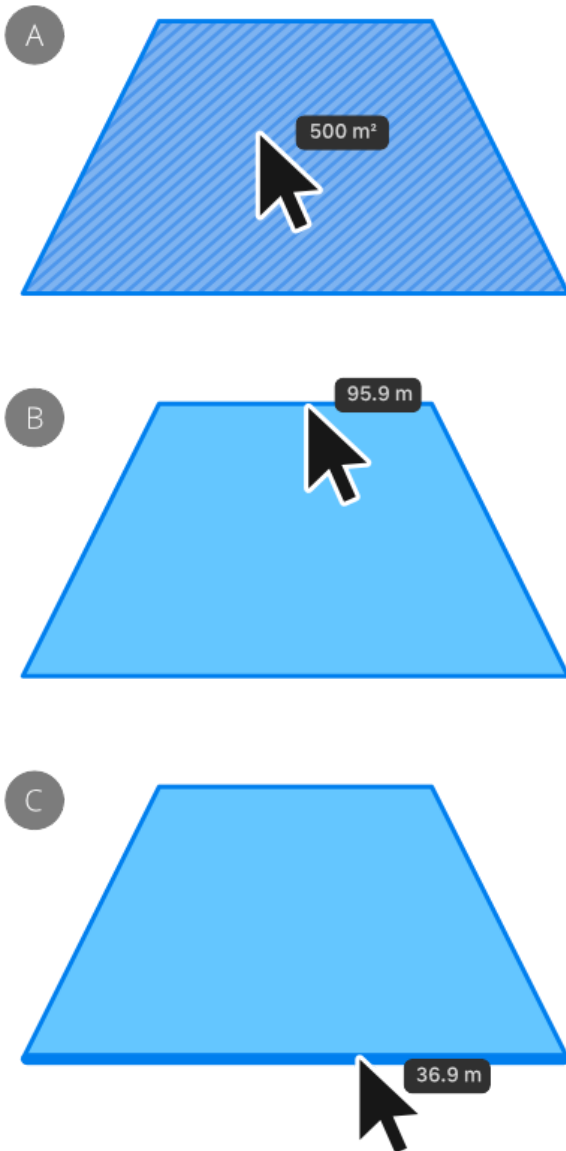


Measure Tool: (A) Point - Point (horizontally, vertically, diagonally), (B) Point - Curve, (C) Point - Center, (D) Point - Line, (E) Point - Guide, (F) Point - Page center, (G) Point - Page center (tangent; with projection line), (H) Point - Page edge and (I) Point - Page edge at Page center and (J) Along a diagonal straight line.

The Measure Tool is also plane-aware, so measurement can be made along the axes of isometric or axonometric grids.

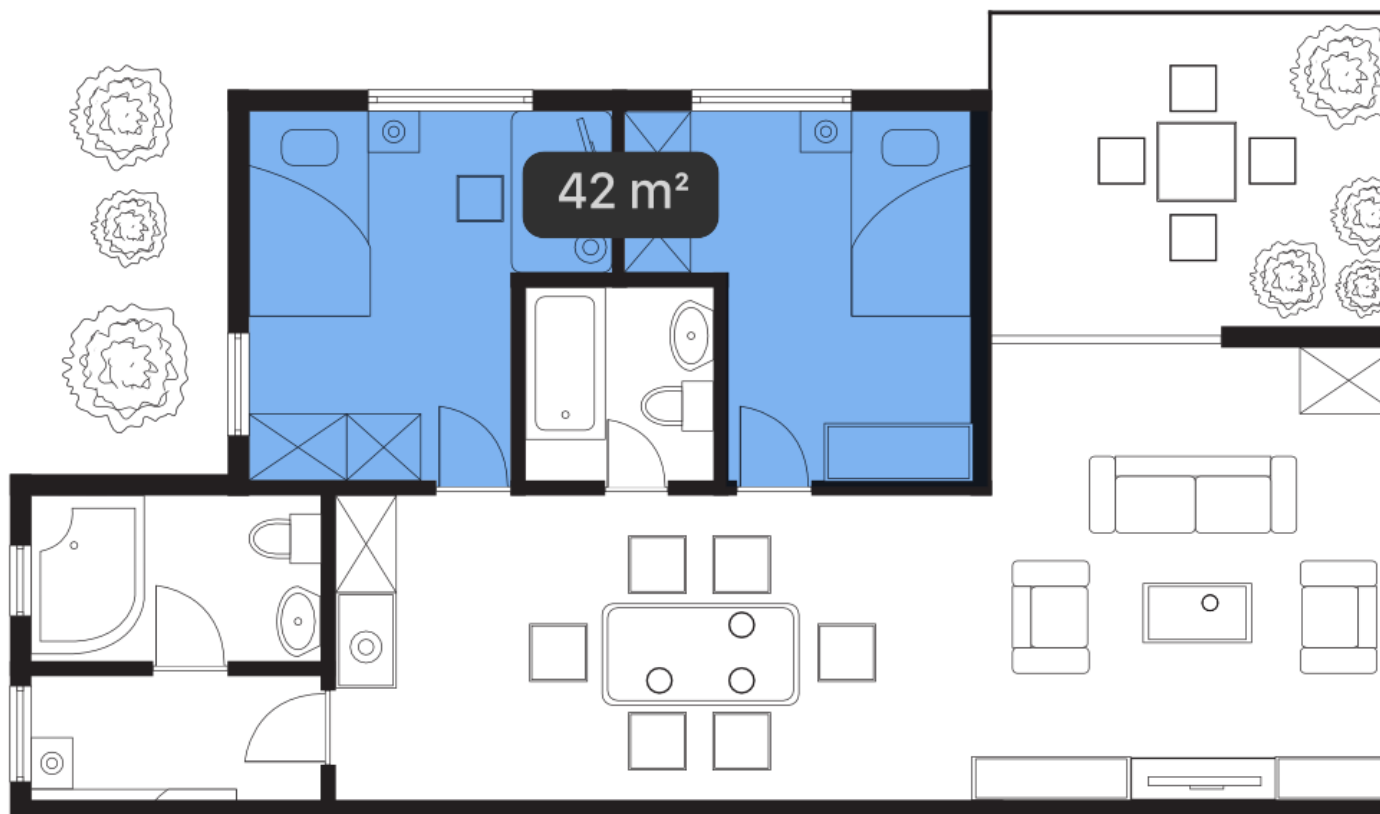
Measuring with the Area Tool

This tool displays the area, total perimeter length or specific straight-line segment lengths of an object when you hover over it. For area measurements, linear hatching indicates the targeted object along with the object's area as an overlaid readout.



Single-object area/perimeter measurement with the **Area Tool**: (A) Area of a closed object, (B) Perimeter of a object, (C) Straight-line 'cusped' segment length on the object.

You can also calculate the area of multiple objects by clicking an initial object and using modifier keys to include further objects. A blue highlight indicates objects included in the total selection, while dark-blue linear hatching (not shown), on hover over of an object in that selection, identifies it as the 'active' object and reports just its area measurement.

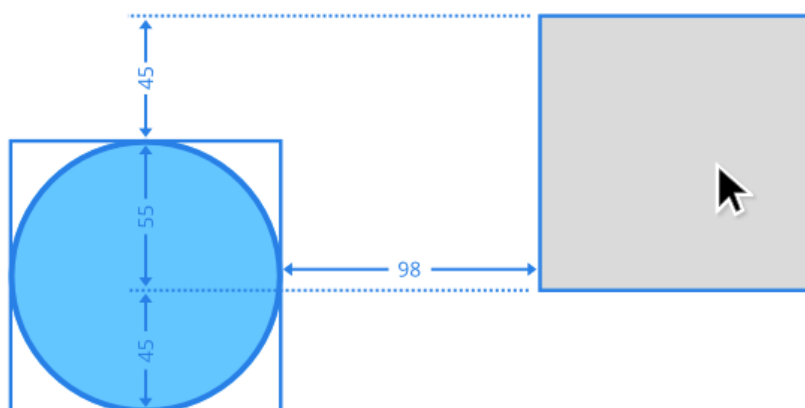


Multi-object area measurement of selected objects with the **Area Tool**.

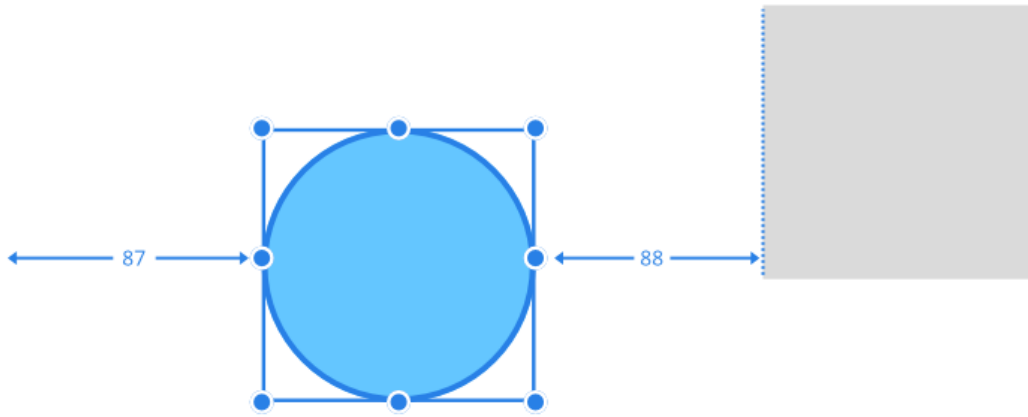
Overlapping objects will report the **Total** area on a hover-over readout; nonoverlapping objects will report it on the context toolbar only.

Measuring between objects

Using the **Ctrl** key with the Move Tool and shape tools will display measurements between objects as you move your cursor around the page. These relate to the distance between the selected object(s) and other object (or page elements) and will update dynamically as the cursor moves.



'Hover over' measurements displaying the size of the gaps between the selected circle and the square.



'Hover over' measurements displayed when a circle is nudged to the right using the right arrow key.

For example, with a shape selected, measurements will show the distance, using labeled arrows, between the shape and:

- another shape, when the cursor is positioned over that target shape.
- the page edges, when the cursor is positioned over a blank portion of the page.

The measurement will then update as the cursor moves over an object to show the size of the horizontal and vertical gaps between this object and the selection.

 Measurements are not persistent, are non-printable and are not saved with your document.

▼ To display distance measurements:

1. Select the **Measure Tool**.
2. Do one of the following:
 - Click-drag from a start point to an end point.
 - Click for a start point, then click for an end point.

Use the **Esc** key to clear any measurement.

▼ To display area measurements:

1. With the **Move Tool** active, select the object(s).
2. From the Measure Tool flyout, select the **Area Tool**.
3. Hover over the target object shown in blue. For multi-object areas, any one of the selected objects (shown temporarily in blue) will report the total area on hover over, as well as the currently hovered-over object area (in blue linear hatching).

 Area measurements will also be reported on the context toolbar while the selection remains in place, including the total area of selected objects.

 If you click a blue selected area it will be removed from the total area calculation found on the context toolbar. On hover over this excluded area will highlight in red.

▼ To display perimeter measurements:

1. With the **Move Tool** active, select the object.

2. From the Measure Tool flyout, select the **Area Tool**.

3. Do one of the following:

-  For an object's full perimeter length: With the context toolbar's **Perimeter Mode** set to **Full Edges**, hover over the target object's perimeter. The thicker blue highlight will report the object's full perimeter length.
-  For a specific straight-line segment length(s): With the context toolbar's **Perimeter Mode** set to **Cusped Segments**, hover over a specific segment to report just that segment's length along with the perimeter length. Optionally, you can click the segment (turning it red) and click additional adjacent or non-adjacent segments to make multi-segment perimeter measurements, reported as **Selected edges** on the context toolbar.

 Perimeter measurement will also be reported on the context toolbar while the selection remains in place—Total perimeter length is shown, along with length excluding any holes.

▼ To display measurements on hover over:

- With the **Move Tool** active, select one or more objects and then hold down **Ctrl** while moving the cursor over a target object.

The target object will display measurements from the selected object to the target object (if hovered over) or page element (if no objects are hovered over).



Modifier keys

When using the Measure Tool, the following modifier keys can be used while the measurement is being drawn:

- The **Shift** key constrains the measurement line to 45° intervals. Tangents and equal bisecting angles will also be displayed while the key is pressed. Holding the mouse button down for a slightly longer duration will, on dragging, additionally draw a dashed projection line, whose axis can be toggled by pressing the ~ key.
- Use either up or down arrow keys to constrain measurements to vertical; left or right arrow keys to constrain to horizontal.
- The **Alt** key temporarily switches off snapping.

When using the Area Tool, the following modifier keys can be used:

- **Shift**-click adds an object to your current selection for area measurement; use it to deselect an included object too.
- **Ctrl**-click selects a new object and clears the current selection.

SEE ALSO:

[Area Tool](#)

[Measure Tool](#)

[Snapping](#)

[Drawing scale](#)

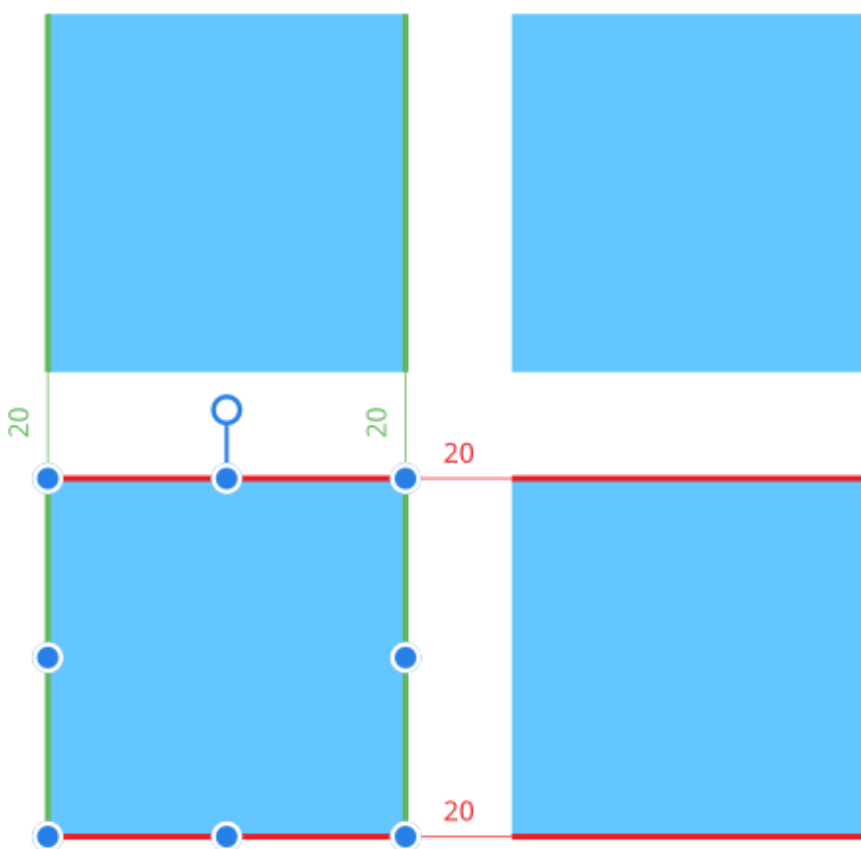
[Dynamic guides](#)

Dynamic guides

Dynamic guides are intelligent guide lines which automatically appear when moving and aligning objects or nodes.

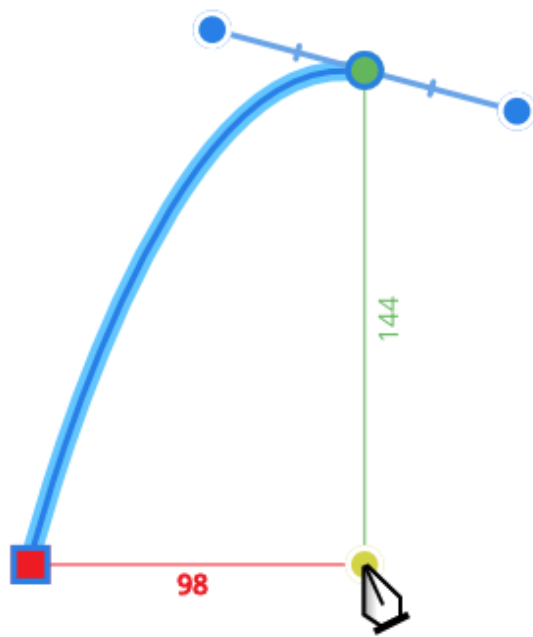
Dynamic guides appear automatically in two instances:

- As you drag objects to help you align and resize objects to existing object edges, centers, vertices, and page elements (e.g. page margins). These guides display in red when aligning horizontally and in green when aligning vertically.



You'll only see them when snapping is enabled, depending on the active snapping options.

- When drawing curves with the Pen Tool. If **Snap** options on the tool's context toolbar are enabled, nodes or control handles can be snapped to other nodes. To help this, dynamic guides show while dragging nodes or handles. Snapping and guide behavior is completely independent of the 'global' Snapping option on the main toolbar.



SEE ALSO:

[Snapping](#)

[Pen Tool](#)

[Measuring](#)

[Guides](#)

Snapping

Snapping simplifies the positioning of new and existing objects by 'magnetizing' moved or resized objects to other objects or document elements.



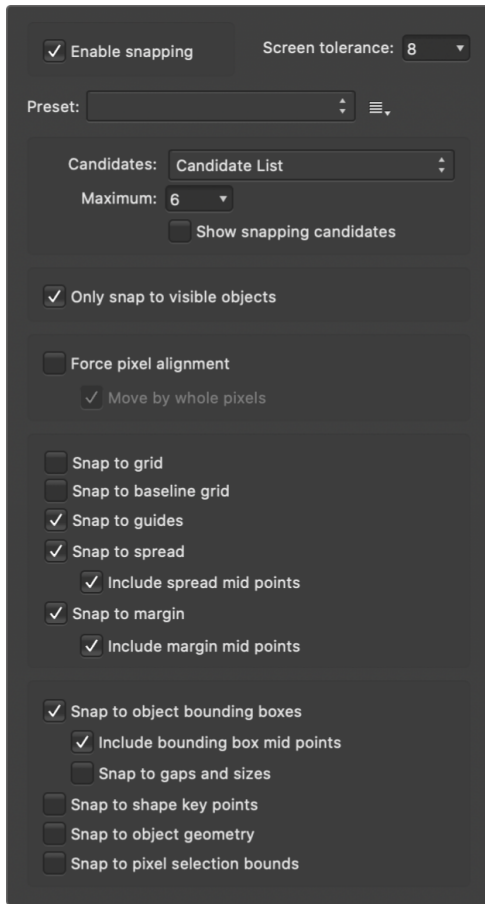
Snapping causes images, brush strokes, lines, shapes, and selection areas to align to nearby grid lines, guides, margins, artboards or spreads, or any combination of these. You can also snap to object bounding boxes, key points on shapes, and to an object's geometry. Text can also snap to the baseline of other text (the first line only for text frames) and artistic text objects can snap to the height of previously created artistic text.

To help understand snapping behavior, colored dynamic guides and target nodes display when you snap to objects. The colors used are:

- Red line: Object snaps to target horizontally.
- Green line: Object snaps to target vertically.
- Yellow node: Object snaps to shape's key points (often centers) or geometry.
- Blue line: Object snaps to third plane when using triangular projection grid.
- Orange line: Object snaps to target horizontally or vertically if a projection grid is active.

 Dynamic guides work in conjunction with snapping to provide a visual aid when aligning. Dynamic guides also include labels which report the distance between the snapping objects (measured in the document's set units).

💡 For web graphic development, you may wish to use [Force Pixel Alignment](#). This complements any active snapping settings.



The range of snapping options.

Snapping candidates

Snapping candidates are page objects which are available for you to snap to. You can specify which objects are used in the snap, and eliminate the ones you are not interested in. Alternatively, you can construct your document in a more hierarchical way by using **Immediate layers**. You can set how candidates are created using the following settings:

- **Candidate List**—limits the number of objects which are snapping candidates to the number you set. Creating a new object, or hovering over an existing object, designates it as a snapping candidate in this case. Only the active snapping candidates can be snapped to.
- **Immediate layers**—limits the number of candidates to only the current layer, layers that are siblings or the immediate parent layer.
- **Immediate layers and children**—limits the number of candidates to the objects on the current layer and any of the layer's subordinate child layers.
- **All layers**—does not limit the number of snapping candidates in the document.

▼ To activate/deactivate snapping:

- Click **Snapping** on the main toolbar.

▼ To temporarily override snapping:

- Press the **Alt** key while you're positioning an object. Snapping won't occur while the key is depressed.

▼ To exclude an object from being a snapping candidate:

- On the **Layers** panel, **Right-click** the object entry and select **Exclude From Snapping**.

A symbol, , appears on the layer entry to indicate this exclusion.

Snapping presets

A powerful and comprehensive set of snapping options are available to you. To make snapping setup quick and easy, one of several snapping presets can be chosen which group recommended snapping options according to how you plan to work (e.g., for UI design, curve drawing, etc.).

▼ To select a snapping preset:

1. Click the **Snapping** option's arrow.
2. From the **Preset** pop-up menu, select a preset.

▼ To customize a snapping preset:

1. Click the **Snapping** option's arrow.
2. Select a preset on which to base your new snapping options.
3. Check individual options on/off to override the current preset's options.

The options will be in effect immediately.

▼ To save as a custom preset for future use:

1. Click the **Options** menu adjacent to the **Preset** pop-up menu..
2. Select **Create preset**.

The custom preset is in effect immediately.

Snapping options

Individual snapping options can be switched on or off to suit your needs, drawing style, and the project you are working on. The preset that you initially adopted will be customized in the process.

The following options are available from the pop-up dialog:

- **Screen tolerance**—controls the distance you have to be to an object before snapping occurs.
- **Enable snapping**—when checked, objects will snap to specified criteria. This must be selected to change other options.
- **Presets**—Select a preset which is a grouping of snapping options for specific ways of working.
 - Page layouts—for designs to be printed, where snapping to placed guides, margins, and spreads is important.
 - Page layouts with objects—as above but with additional object-to-object alignment.
 - Object creation—perfect for simple object-to-object alignment to bounding boxes and their midpoints, plus for aligning some shapes to key points. Key points are automatically added points on some objects, e.g. where a shape's corner is made rounded, key points are placed at the start and end of the rounded corner.
 - Curve drawing—the setup for non-geometric use (i.e., drawing with the pen/pencil/brush tools).
 - UI design—for UI/web design for pixel accuracy when using snapping to fixed guides and grid.
- **Candidates**—sets how candidates are created. Select from the pop-up menu.

- **Maximum**—limits the number of active candidates when **Candidate List** is selected (see above). If you reach this limit, new candidates replace older candidates in chronological order.
- **Show snapping candidates**—when checked, highlights the active snapping candidates, i.e. objects that can be snapped to by prior selection or hover over. Candidates will display a 'purple halo'.
- **Only snap to visible objects**—when checked, only visible objects are snapped to.
- **Force pixel alignment**—identical to the Toolbar option—see [Force Pixel Alignment](#).
 - **Move by whole pixels**—identical to the Toolbar option—see [Force Pixel Alignment](#).
- **Snap to grid**—when checked, content snaps to a line grid (if switched on from the **View** menu). Not available when using Force Pixel Alignment.
- **Snap to guides**—when checked, content snaps to guides (if switched on from the **View** menu).
- **Snap to spread**—when checked, content snaps to the edge of the document (ignoring margins).
 - **Include spread mid points**—when checked, content snaps to vertical or horizontal center of the page. This option is only available if the above option is selected.
- **Snap to margin**—when checked, content snaps to page margins (if switched on from the **View** menu).
 - **Include margin mid points**—when checked, content snaps to vertical or horizontal center of the page margin. This option is only available if the above option is selected.
- **Snap to object bounding boxes**—when checked, objects can be aligned based on its bounding box.
 - **Include bounding box mid points**—when checked, objects snap to vertical or horizontal center of a target object. This option is only available if the above option is selected.
 - **Snap to gaps and sizes**—when checked, arrows represent matched gaps between snapping candidates and matched horizontal and/or vertical sizes.
- **Snap to shape key points**—when checked, objects can be aligned to key points on shapes, such as the start and end of a rounded corner.
- **Snap to object geometry**—when checked, curves can be snapped to vertices and not simply to the bounding box or key points. Vertices are object corners or intersections, such as the points of a star, within a shape's bounding box.
- **Snap to pixel selection bounds**—when checked, objects can be snapped to the bounds of a pixel selection. For example, using the Flood Select Tool, a pixel selection drawn over image 'edges', which would otherwise not be snappable, will expose those edges for snapping.

 Snapping always snaps to the currently set measurement unit as defined in **File>Document Setup**.

 You can also access the above settings from the **Snapping** option via the **View** menu.

 If you have a document with a high number of objects or layers and activate the **All layers** snapping candidate option, you may experience performance issues when moving or resizing objects due to the sheer number of snapping candidates.

SEE ALSO:

[Force Pixel Alignment](#)

[Dynamic guides](#)

[Grids](#)

[Guides](#)

Curve snapping

Curve snapping lets you align any moving node (or control handle) to an already placed node or curves's geometry.

You can take advantage of curve snapping either as you draw with the Pen Tool or when editing the curve with the Node Tool. Curve snapping gives you accurate positional control of nodes where a more symmetrical approach to curve drawing is needed.

 Curve snapping operates independently of global snapping but can be used conjunction with it.

The curve snapping options are hosted on the Pen or Node Tool's context toolbar. Snapping options can be used in combination with each other.

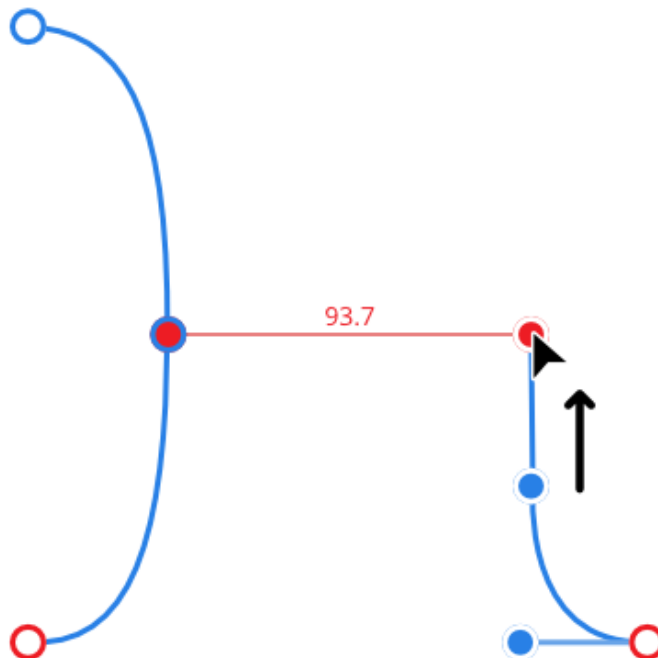
Snap option



Align to nodes of selected curves

Description Aligns moving node horizontally (shows in red) or vertically (in green; not shown) to another node

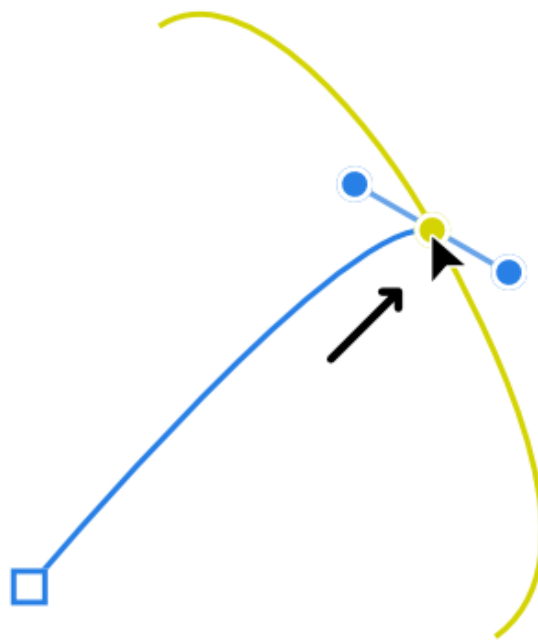
Example





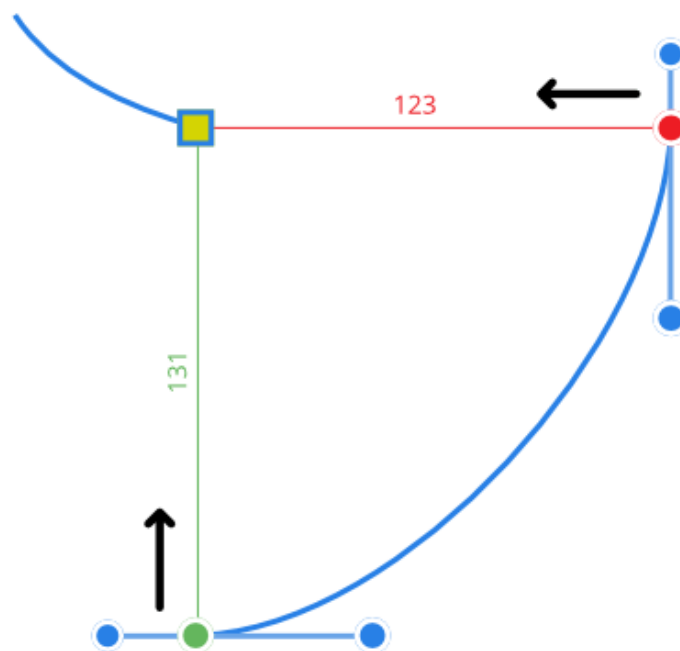
Snap to geometry of selected curves

Snaps moving node to the same or different curve's path (shown in yellow) or node



Snap all selected nodes when dragging

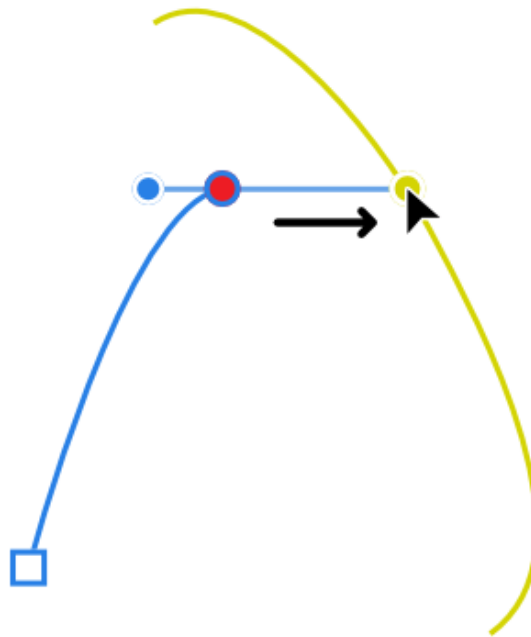
Snaps multiple selected nodes (shows in red and green), when dragging, to a 'target' node (yellow) on any selected curves





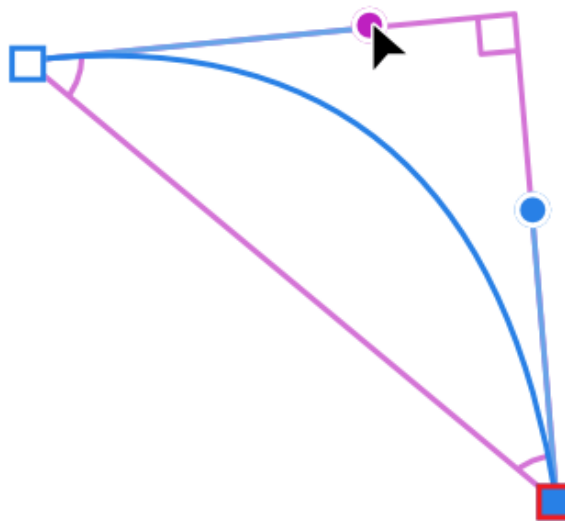
Align
handle
positions
using
snapping
options

Snaps control
handle using
any of the
snapping
criteria
currently set in
Global
snapping, e.g.
to grid, guide,
object
geometry/node
(shown in
yellow), key
points, etc.



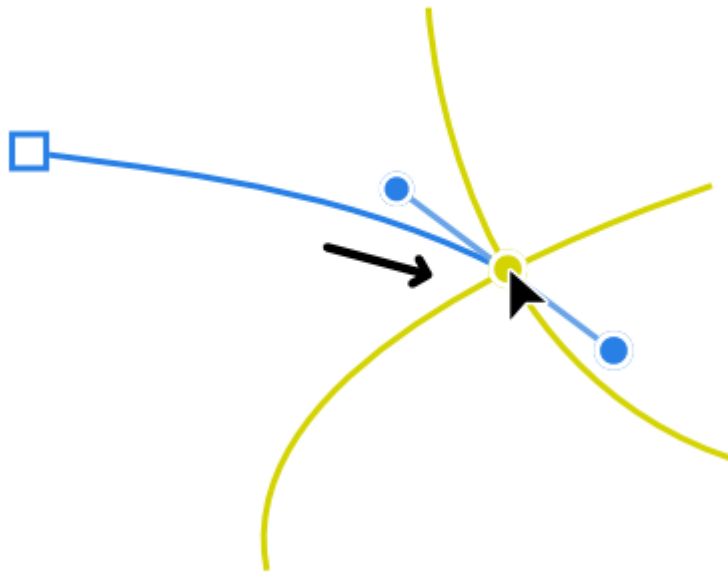
Perform
construction
snapping

Snaps control
handles to
suggested
angles and
alignments for
precise
geometry and
positioning.
See separate
[Construction
snapping](#) topic.



✎ When drawing, you can also snap the moving node to any curve intersection point or node on the same or different curve if the global snapping option **Snap to object**

geometry is enabled.



▼ To switch on curve snapping options:

1. Select the **Pen Tool** or **Node Tool**.
2. From the context toolbar's **Snap** section, enable combinations of the buttons for different curve snapping behavior.

SEE ALSO:

[Snapping](#)

[Construction snapping](#)

Construction snapping for curves

Use construction snapping to help you build complicated shapes or intersections accurately and easily, giving you simple access to parallels, right angles, reflected and mirrored angles. Great for precise and symmetrical curve drawing, especially for technical drawing styles and typographic design.

Construction snapping

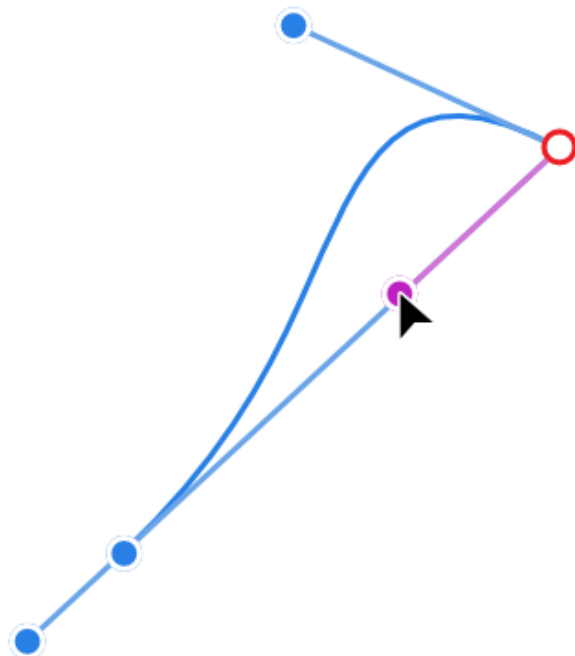
Construction snapping lets you snap a node's control handle to useful construction angles relative to the adjacent node and opposing control handle. You can also balance control handle lengths on adjacent nodes.

You can enable construction snapping via a single button which permits control handle snapping to various angles and alignments.

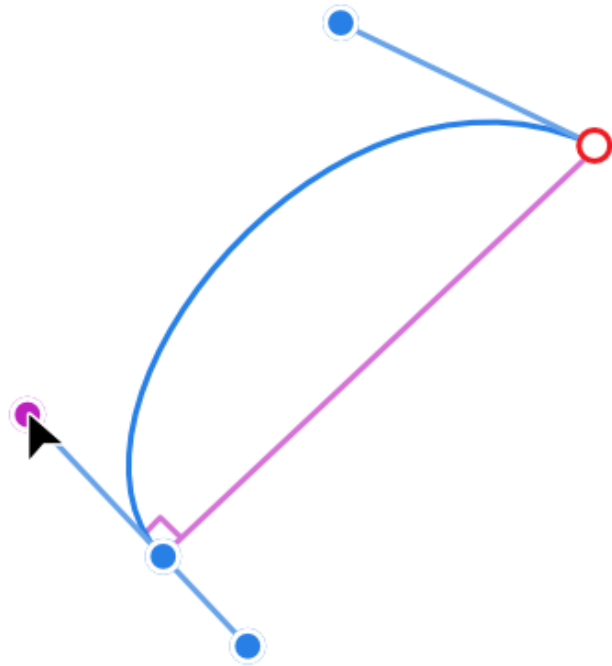
Control handle snapping behavior

Example

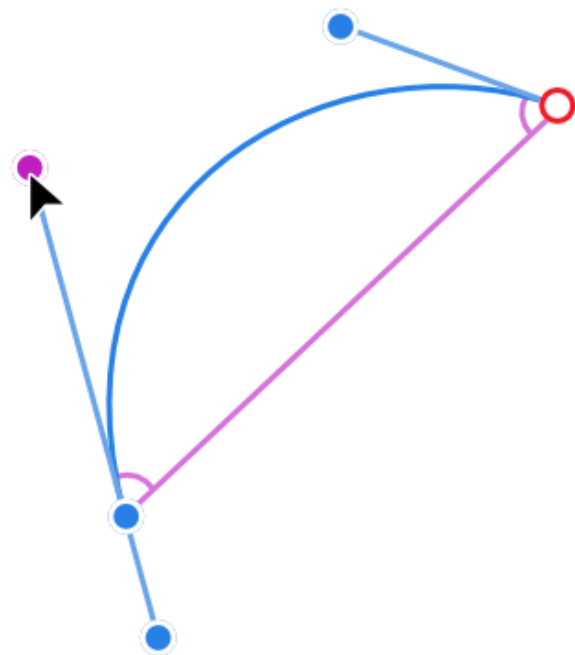
Snap the leading control handle inline to adjacent node



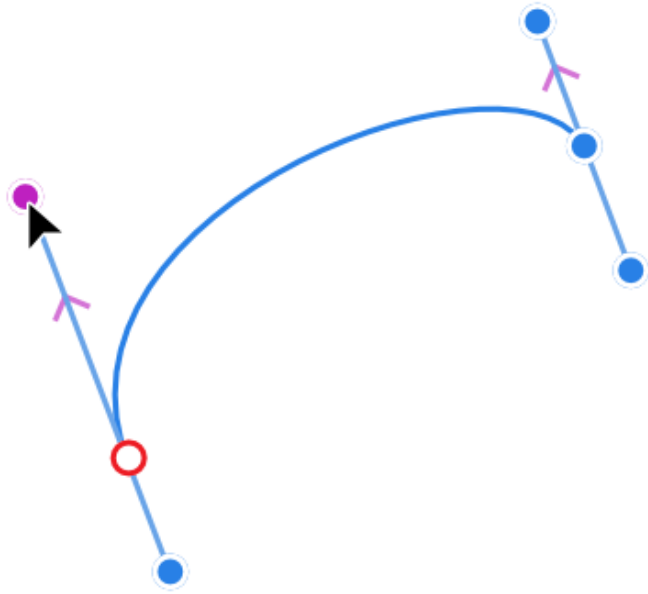
Snap 90° to inline



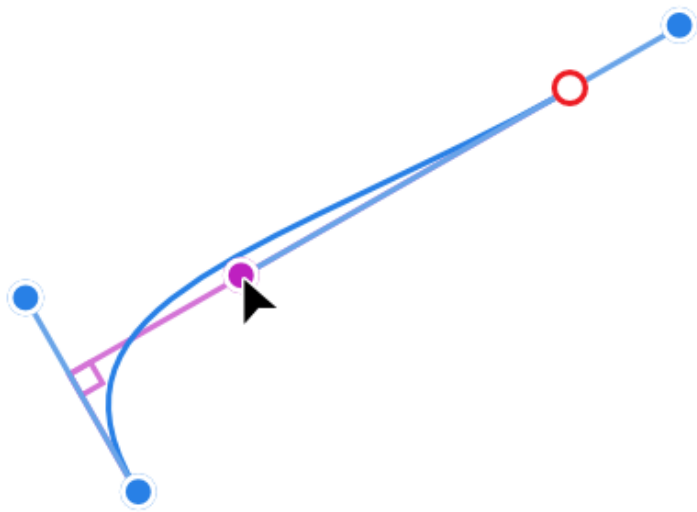
Snap to reflected/mirrored angle



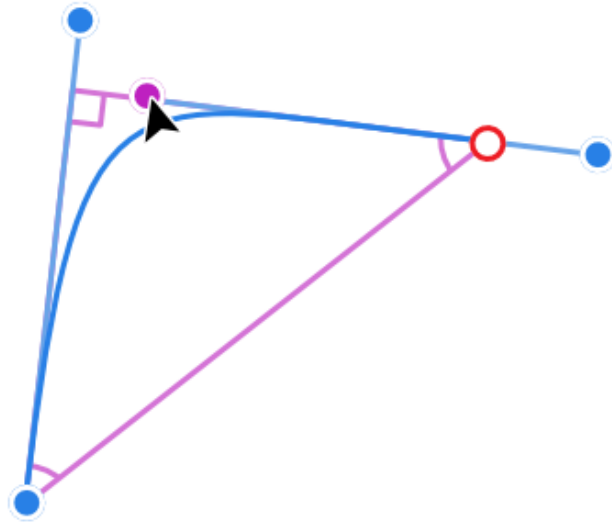
Snap to parallel control handle



Snap to 90° from parallel control handle



Snap to logical triangle

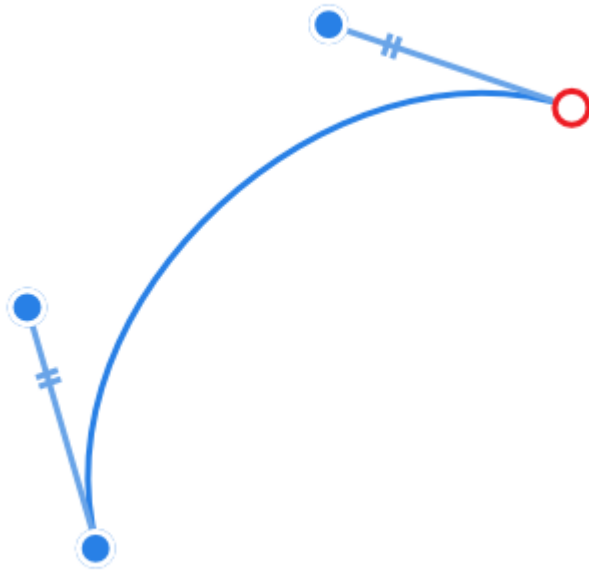


These snapping options operate independently of [global snapping](#). They help avoid having to align control handles to grid or guide and offer additional accuracy and symmetry once nodes have been positioned using [Curve snapping](#) options.

▼ To apply construction snapping:

1. Select the **Pen Tool** or **Node Tool**.
2. From the context toolbar's **Snap** section, enable **Perform construction snapping**.
3. Drag a control handle such that it snaps to angles and alignments.

 For reflected and parallel control handles, after snapping the control handle direction you can use a second action (holding the **Shift** key) to snap the handle lengths to match the preceding or following handle (while maintaining the direction you already snapped to). This produces perfectly balanced control handles, indicated by the double markers.



Sometimes you might see both single and double markers on the same control handle which means, respectively, that the control handle pairs are equal length and the control handle is the same length as the adjacent control handle.

SEE ALSO:

[Snapping](#)

[Curve snapping](#)

[Node Tool](#)

[Pen Tool](#)

Force Pixel Alignment

Force Pixel Alignment will snap objects, nodes and handles, and pixel selection areas to full pixels when created, moved or modified. If this option is switched off, objects and selections can occupy partial pixels.

This snapping method works together with other forms of snapping. If you snap to an object that is not aligned to a pixel, then the resulting snap will not be pixel aligned. To snap only to pixels, be sure to switch off other modes of non-pixel snapping, such as grids and guides if they are not on-pixel.

💡 Force Pixel Alignment is particularly useful for web graphic development.

Move By Whole Pixels

In addition to Force Pixel Alignment, the **Move By Whole Pixels** option allows you to constrain the movement of objects, nodes and handles to whole pixels.

Move By Whole Pixels is particularly useful for repositioning an object by a particular pixel distance while also maintaining the relevant partial pixels an object occupies.

⚠️ If you deactivate **Move By Whole Pixels** but have **Force Pixel Alignment** active, moving an object which occupies partial pixels will also transform it marginally.

✍️ Force Pixel Alignment complements any active [snapping](#) settings.

▼ To activate/deactivate Force Pixel Alignment:

- Click **Force Pixel Alignment** on the Toolbar.

▼ To activate/deactivate Move By Whole Pixels:

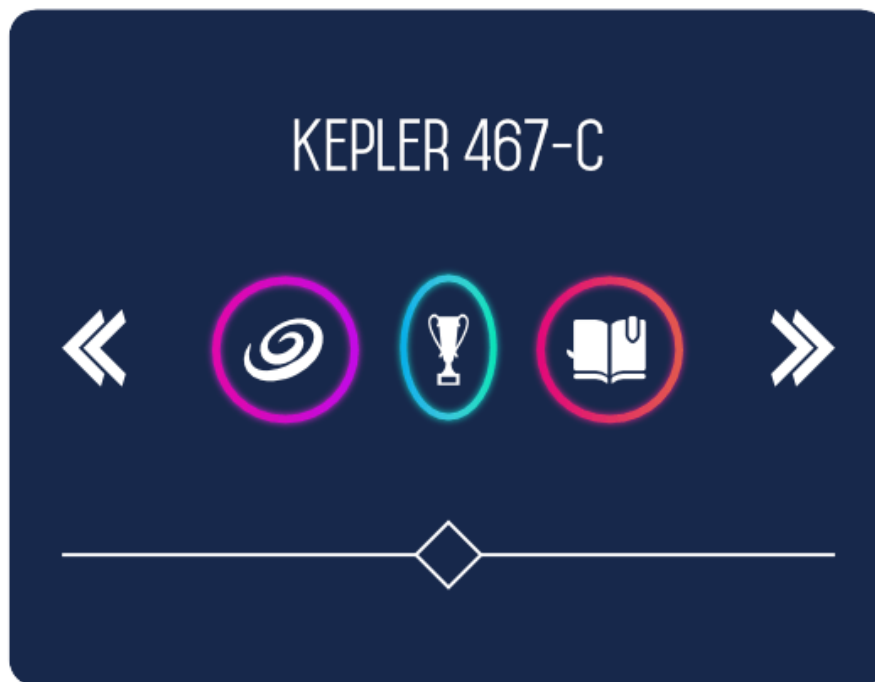
- With **Force Pixel Alignment** active, click **Move By Whole Pixels** on the Toolbar.

▼ To temporarily override snapping:

- Press the **Alt** key while you're positioning. Snapping won't occur while the key is depressed.

Constraints

A child object can be prevented from being scaled when resizing its parent and be anchored to its parent in different ways. This ensures that designs can be presented in different layouts quickly and easily. The feature is perfect for designing UI mockups, e.g., to envisage how dialogs can be resized without affecting the position of every dialog control.



Before

Scaling has been disabled for all objects except the text, trophy button and the top lines. Anchoring has been applied to most objects except the text and trophy button.

Using constraints gives you the freedom to design without worrying that design rework will be adversely affected by unwanted object rescaling. By controlling selectively which objects will/won't be scaled and anchored, your design will always respond correctly to scaling.

Constraints only work in parent - child object relationships, i.e. where a parent object (container) contains nested content. A child object's scaling and anchoring is always in relation its container. For example, in UI design, a device mockup could have parent - child object relationships such as artboard - panel, panel - button, etc.

Constraining is exclusively carried out from the **Constraints** panel. The panel controls:

- horizontal and vertical scaling in relation to its parent's size
- anchoring of an object by its top, left, right and/or bottom edge in relation to its parent object's equivalent edge.

By default, nested content will scale when its container is resized. A child object is *not* anchored by default.

Locking aspect ratio

To prevent a child object losing its aspect ratio when its parent is scaled disproportionately, you can set it to **Min Fit** or **Max Fit**.

-  **Min Fit**—when the parent object is resized disproportionately, the child object may scale so it always fits within its parent object (if unanchored). Use on text to ensure it always fully displays.
-  **Max Fit**—when the parent object is resized disproportionately, the child object may scale. The child object can become bigger than its parent object, potentially clipping content from view. Using a web banner mockup as an example, a child object (e.g., an image) will always fully fill the containing banner area (avoiding white letterboxing) but may be subject to clipping.

In both cases, if the parent object is resized proportionately, the child object will also scale proportionally.

 If a child object is set to **Min Fit** and its parent object is resized wider, the child object will not scale. However, if the parent object is later made taller, the child object will begin scale to honor its original aspect ratio and size with respect to its parent.

▼ To prevent a child object from scaling:

1. Select a child object.
2. On the **Constraints** panel, click the horizontal or vertical solid double arrow (or both) in the panel's inner square. A grayed-out dashed arrow means that scaling won't occur when its parent object is resized.

 An artboard, when resized, will not scale its contents by default. To allow constraints to operate as for other parent - child objects, uncheck **Lock Children** on the context toolbar.

▼ To anchor a child object to its parent's boundaries:

1. Select a child object.
2. On the **Constraints** panel, click a grayed-out dashed line between the inner and outer square to anchor the object to its parent in that direction (top, bottom, left, or right). A solid line means anchoring is being applied.

▼ To maintain a child object's aspect ratio:

1. Select a child object.
2. On the **Constraints** panel, click **Min Fit** or **Max Fit**.

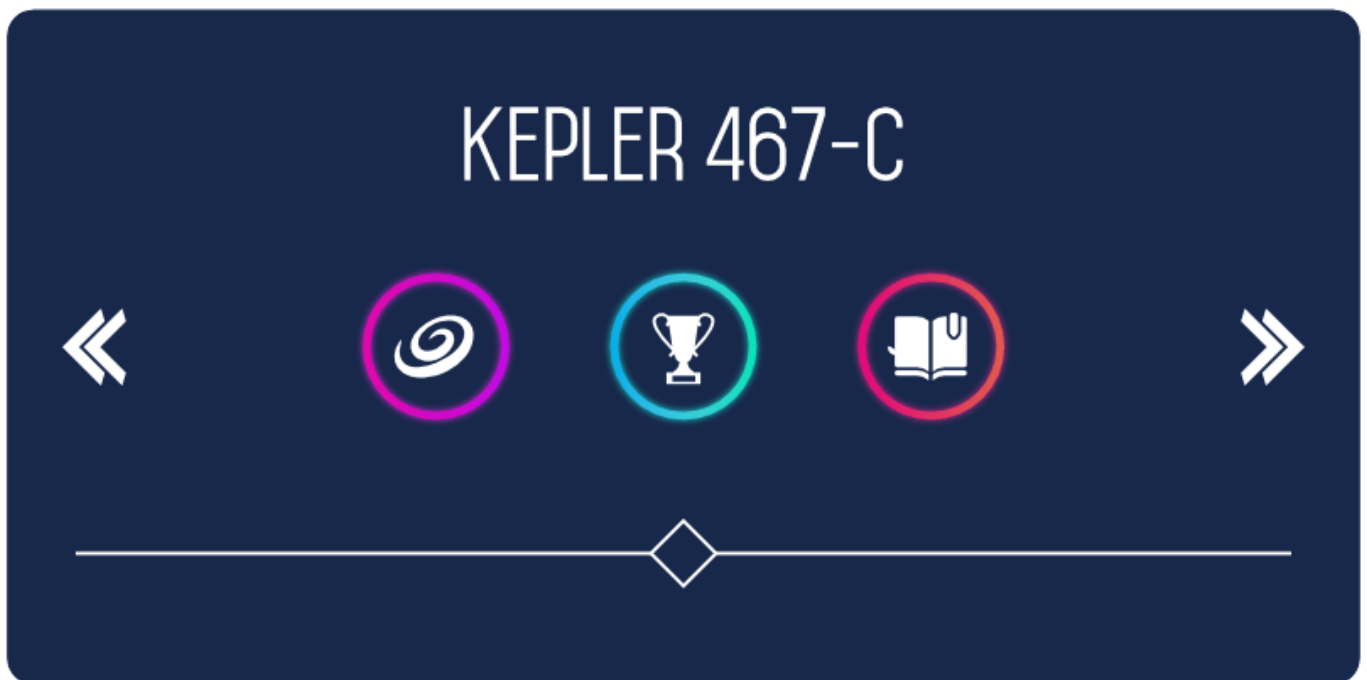
SEE ALSO:

[Transforming objects](#)

[Constraints panel](#)

Constraints

A child object can be prevented from being scaled when resizing its parent and be anchored to its parent in different ways. This ensures that designs can be presented in different layouts quickly and easily. The feature is perfect for designing UI mockups, e.g., to envisage how dialogs can be resized without affecting the position of every dialog control.



After (Click/Tap)

Scaling has been disabled for all objects except the text, trophy button and the top lines. Anchoring has been applied to most objects except the text and trophy button.

Using constraints gives you the freedom to design without worrying that design rework will be adversely affected by unwanted object rescaling. By controlling selectively which objects will/won't be scaled and anchored, your design will always respond correctly to scaling.

Constraints only work in parent - child object relationships, i.e. where a parent object (container) contains nested content. A child object's scaling and anchoring is always in relation its container. For example, in UI design, a device mockup could have parent - child object relationships such as artboard - panel, panel - button, etc.

Constraining is exclusively carried out from the **Constraints** panel. The panel controls:

- horizontal and vertical scaling in relation to its parent's size
- anchoring of an object by its top, left, right and/or bottom edge in relation to its parent object's equivalent edge.

By default, nested content will scale when its container is resized. A child object is *not* anchored by default.

Locking aspect ratio

Using snapshots

A snapshot stores the state of your work at an arbitrary point in time, much like a freeze frame.

In contrast to reverting edits step-by-step using the **History** panel, snapshots let you instantly restore your work to an explicitly defined stage.

You might do this in advance of carrying out a sequence of complex operations to allow yourself to step back to a specific point in time if things don't go to plan.

Multiple snapshots can be created. So, if you're experimenting with different design ideas, you can also create a different snapshot for each one to help you decide which idea you prefer, all while working in a single document.

If needed, you can create a new document from a snapshot.

About the Snapshot panel

The **Snapshots** panel is available in the **Designer Persona** and the **Pixel Persona**.

The panel is hidden by default. It can be switched on via the **Window** menu.

 Snapshots are saved with your document and are available to be used in future sessions.

▼ To create a snapshot:

1. On the **Snapshots** panel, click **Add Snapshot**.
2. On the dialog, enter a name to help identify the snapshot at a later date. If you don't, the snapshot's name will be its date and time of creation.
3. Click **OK**.

▼ To restore a snapshot:

1. On the **Snapshots** panel, select a snapshot from the list.
2. Click **Restore Snapshot**.

▼ To create a new document from a snapshot:

1. On the **Snapshots** panel, select a snapshot from the list.
2. Click **New Document From Snapshot**.

▼ To delete a snapshot:

1. On the **Snapshots** panel, select a snapshot from the list.
2. Click **Delete Snapshot**.

SEE ALSO:

[Snapshots panel](#)

[History panel](#)